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No. 43

RECORDS OF NIAGARA

A Collection of Contemporary Letters and Documents

1812

Collected and Edited
by
BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK

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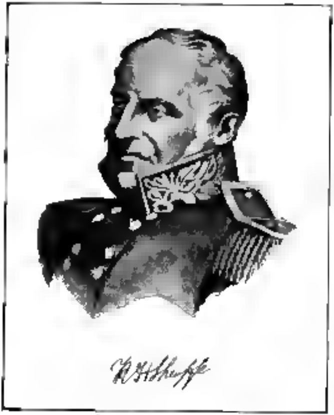

R H Sheaffe

— Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe —

PREFACE

The documents printed in the following pages have been collected from a variety of manuscript sources and will be found to complement those published in "The Documentary History of the Campaigns on the Niagara Frontier in 1812 and 1813," in 1896 and 1899 by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. They throw considerable further light on the civil and military affairs of that time.

RECORDS OF NIAGARA

No 43

1812

FROM THOMAS DICKSON TO JAMES BROCK

Queenston, 11th January 1812.

Sir

Mr Addison having been very ill for these two weeks past, and although the Doctors now think him out of danger he will not be able to attend at York the ensuing Session of Parliament as Chaplain to the House of Assembly by his desire, therefore I now write to Mr Stuart[1] to request him to officiate for Mr Addison, and the present is to request you to get His Honor the President to give him permission for Mr Stuart so to do.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedt Servant

Thomas Dickson

James Brock Esquire
Secretary to His Honor the President.

(Dominion Archives Sundries 1812)

Within a month Mr Addison had recovered sufficiently to be able to write the following letter

Niagara, Feby 8th, 1812.

To His Excellency Genl. Brock

May it please your Excellency

Mr Peters[2] having made me acquainted with the probability of a new District being formed at the Head of Lake Ontario[3] in which he contemplates to remove and establish himself and having suggested to me a desire to obtain the office of Clerk of the Peace or Register in the event of such a Division taking place, I have taken the liberty to recommend Mr. Peters to your Excellency's notice as a person whom I have long known, and whom I believe to be every way qualified to fill either of those Offices above mentioned.

---

[1] Reverend George Okill Stuart, minister of the Church of England at York

[2] William Birdseye Peters, a son of Reverend Samuel Peters.

[3] Formed in 1816 as the District of Gore

I have the honor to be
your Excellency's most Obedt.
& most Hble. Servt.

Robt. Addison
Minr. of Niagara

(Dominion Archives, Sundries Upper Canada, 1812.)

FROM JOSEPH EDWARDS TO HON. JOHN McGILL

Niagara, 17th Jan., 1812.

Sir,—

In accounting for the above balance [£126.15.0] permit me to observe that a contract of work for the amount has been contracted for some part of the money advanced, and about £20 of the work actually done but the men through their tardiness being catched by the frost when as they say within two days of finishing I could not examine the same. Of course they remain as yet unpaid, and the whole uncharged. An exception may again be made to the purchase of spades under the impression that the law requires persons performing Statute Duty to come prepared with those articles. The British Statute does the same but implements are also furnished and I am fully convinced that the purchase of wheelbarrows and planks in addition to the above would be of great use on that road to assist the Statute Labour when the public money is expended.

It may be thought that I have unnecessarily protracted the appropriation of the money but I am confident the delay has been of good to the Public since it has enabled me to see the utility of a continued ditch on one side only of the road, the water always finding its level has pointed out the places where to bridge across the channel dug to let the water pass and has had the most happy effect on this road.

As to the £45 appropriated to the cross road in Grantham it is untouched in my hands. Soon after it was known that the money was voted I was applied to by one Joel Austin and who I dare say would have done the work faithfully. Not having been then appointed I could only promise to hear his proposals when that took place, he however it seems, went and having boasted of having got the contract and I soon found a violent party (Methodists) each individual of which had anticipated a share of the money was formed against him. After being appointed on the 5th of June I twice examined the place which I found little more than a pathway a long narrow causeway seemingly not wider than ten feet, with a ditch close on each side made diagonally across the lands of a few farmers for their convenience in going to mill in no place 30 ft wide and when speaking to some of them about moving their fences was answered that they would expect the spaces between the concessions in lieu. Some time after in company with Mr Crooks and Peter Hall Esq I again examined the road and found the same indifference among the few we could see one would remove his fence if the other did. This is not yet done to my knowledge and until it is, in my opinion any money laid out would be thrown away

I have the honor to be &c.

Josh Edwards, Commt &c

Hon. John McGill, Inspector &c., &c York

The following letters show that Hugh Alexander carried on his business at Fort Erie until it was abruptly terminated by the declaration of war

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO PARKER, GERRARD OGILVIE & CO

Fort Erie Jany 20 1812.

When in Montreal last August I left with you twelve barrels pork and requested that the proceeds should be paid to Thos. Clark Esqr on his acct. at Montreal together with twenty barrels of flour which was still at that time at Prescott should Capt Gilkison keep that flour he was to remit to you 45£ Currency which he informed me this fall he had done—some time after Mr Clark's return I called to know if he had received the above which he said he had not and not having heard anything from him on the subject I have now drawn on you in favor of Messrs Lee & Clark for £90 Cy which you will I trust have the goodness to honor and should the above [have] been passed to Mr. Clark's credit since he left Montreal I will remit you either bill or flour early in the spring sufficient to discharge the above draft together with whatever compensation you may think right for the use of the money

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ALEXANDER REA

March 21 1812, Fort Erie

I wrote you on 3 Oct. 1811 requesting you to send the whole of the phials which you had on hand when I left Montreal but have not had the pleasure to hear from you since In consequence of which I am led to believe that the letter must have been miscarried in which case if you have the said phials I will thank you to forward them to Mr McGevach as early as there will be any opportunity of forwarding as I have made promises on the supposition that they would have come last fall and the persons to whom I have promised are anxiously waiting their arrival this spring supposing they are on the communication last fall you will please advise me as soon as possible to say whether you have the phials yet or if you have sent them and what the profits are of your market this season

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ROBERT GILLESPIE

Fort Erie Mar 25 1812

Yours 20th February came to hand the 15th Instant by which I am very well pleased to see the markets are looking up.

I have made an offer to Government for my pork and 200 barrels of flour but am not certain as yet whether it will be accepted or not as there is only a small quantity as yet wanted in this Province I shall be glad to hear from you as often as leisure will permit.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JABEZ D DE WITT

Fort Erie Mar 25 1812

I wrote you on the 3rd of Oct 1811 inclosing a small memorandum for some articles in your line of business but have not as yet had the pleasure to hear from you, therefore have been necessitated to procure the articles from another quarter—you will therefore have the goodness not to send the articles this spring as I shall have no use for them at present

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WILLIAM ALEXANDER NEAR SCHENECTADY

Fort Erie Mar 26 1812

The first of the month I was at Long Point and Ephraim informed me that he was to remit you some money if possible by the first of April. I now enclose you sixty dollars which goes forward by mail and I hope will arrive safe and which place to his credit

I want to see McDougall but he was gone to York. But left a line for me to say that he would be at this place in April and perhaps would have it in his power to pay part—business at this place a very dull at present Ephraim was well when I left Long Point and also your friends in this quarter With compliments to Mrs. Alexander and family

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, March 30th 1812

Your favor of the 23rd instant came duly to hand mentioning our verbal agreement respecting the transport business this season in which I will do the business for what you have stated and part which you have omitted at 1/6 N Y C. per barrel from this place to Chippawa, that being the same also as last year

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie Ap. 1 1812.

Agreeable to your request I called on Mr Lovejoy with your draft who mentioned he had remitted you the amount per Dr Cotham also I spoke to Mr Grosvenor presenting Mr McGevark's two accts the one say £10.8.0 currency which he has paid to Messrs. Clark and Street by request of Thomas Clark Esq and the other small amount of £2.16.0 Cy will be more convenient for him to settle in the same way as he has a demand against John Osborne who is in Clark and Street's employ Having seen Mr Clark's acct in favor of Mr McGevark of Aug 16 1811 for the said sum of £10.8.0 per Clark and Street's receipt for the said money by Mr Osborne I am well convinced that Mr Grosvenor's statement is correct in consequence of which I now enclose to you the above two accts. and also your draft on Mr Joshua Lovejoy for £0.2.0 N Y C.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CLARK AND STREET

Fort Erie, April 6, 1812

Having made a contract with a Mr Goodwin at Chippawa to build a boat for me which he now informs me will be out of his power unless I can procure the plank and scantling from you for that purpose. If you will therefore have the goodness to let him have the quantity I will pay you for the same and you will confer a favor on yours &c

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JAMES CROOKS

Fort Erie April 18, 1812

Having a small acct. with Seth Winslow on his leaving this place he sent me the enclosed draft on W & J Crooks for £9 7.3 N Y C dated 24th instant, his reason for which date is best known to himself. Having just heard that he has resigned I shall request the favor of your acceptance if agreeable. If it is not in your power to accept it you will have the goodness to deliver the written draft to the bearer Mr Grant

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO W & J CROOKS

Fort Erie May 2 1812

Yours of the 24th came to hand yesterday by which I find that £5 15 8 N Y C. on Mr Winslow's draft has been collected and as there is only remaining £3.11.7 due on the draft perhaps you may have it in your power the next time to draw the same on you I should expect are his agents in this quarter and in so doing you will confer a favor on yours &c.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WEST & HASBROOK, ONONDAGA

Fort Erie May 14, 1812

Your favor of 22 April I received the 4th instant and in answer to which I have to state that the 70 bbls of salt was Mr McCormick's property and returned by the time mentioned in your letter say June 1. I shall also mention to Mr S[illegible]? to be in readiness for you the first time I see him as to the delivery of salt at this place I am at a loss to state my price as very little is sold and if any it is on a credit of perhaps 12 months at 40/ per bbl. You will have the goodness to collect all you possibly can from Mr. Mead and forward it as you mentioned to Mr. McCormick if the laws will permit if not forward it to Lewiston to whoever is your agent at that place or Mr. Joshua Fairbanks as you see proper.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CAPT. WILLIAM MILLS

Fort Erie, May 30, 1812

I understand that you have a quantity of cordage on hand in which I presume you have different sizes. Will you have the goodness to send by the return of the ship sixty fathoms of 6 inch or 6½ jute cable for the Chippewa with a bill of the same and when payable. If you could make it payable the 1st Oct. next it would suit me best.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 24, 1812

I enclose you here my acct. for baking 2350 lbs. biscuit for the South West Company—amount £14.2.0, N.Y.C. which you will please pass to my credit. I also made use of 14 bbls. flour for said biscuit which was to be replaced at Queenston, four of which I have received the other ten will you have the goodness to mark H. A. and ship with the rest of my flour should Gray's sloop be at Queenston. I should wish you to ship any flour in her to Prescott—if not send it by the first safe vessel.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 25, 1812

I have in my store 14 bbls. Potash and Pearl ash was marked G. H. for Messrs. Grosvenor and Hancock Buffalo and will be forwarded by the boat next trip, you will please to ship them in the first safe vessel to Prescott and consign them to Messrs. Tappan & Sewell Montreal. All flour is from this at present.

Relations with the United States had become so unsatisfactory and menacing that instructions were issued to place the frontier military posts in Upper Canada in a suitable condition to resist an attack.

FROM NOAH FREER TO LIEUT COLONEL BRUYERES R.E.

Military Secretary's Office
Quebec, 3rd February 1812

Sir

I am directed by the Commander of the Forces to desire that you will take measures and give such orders as may be necessary that the following services at the posts mentioned in Upper Canada be executed with as little delay as possible viz

Fort George

The works &c at this station to undergo such repair as is necessary to render the post tenable.

Fort Chippawa

The picketting around this post to be repaired or renewed.

Fort Erie

The work already executed at this post to be closed.

Fort Amherstburg

To be made tenable.

St Joseph's

The picketting at this post to be repaired or renewed.

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

Two letters from Charles Askin to his father then living at a house which he had named Strabane near Sandwich throw some interesting light on the proceedings of the provincial parliament

York 24th February 1812

Dear Father

I have been here some days on business part of which is to try and get some money from the Legislature to be laid out on a road passing through the place where I live[1] and to get exchanged from the Regt. of Militia to which I now belong into one in the district of Niagara, which I believe I will have no difficulty in doing as the President[2] has no objection to it I had the honor of dining with him the day after my arrival here and have an invitation to a Ball he gives to night, to which I intend going. The Legislature have not done much yet a bill has passed the lower House respecting the Militia. In every district there are to be two light companies to consist of one hundred men each who are to be called out six days in every month until they are perfect in their exercise. The law gives power to the President or person administering the Government to suspend such Officers of the Militia as he thinks proper. A Law respecting carriages meeting on the road has also passed the House all carriages meeting are to turn to the right and give half the road whether going or coming from Market.[3] A few days before I left home I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you and one from Johny—I cannot answer yours till I return home but hope I shall soon have an opportunity of doing it after I get there. I expected James all winter but begin to fear now I shall not see till next summer.

---

[1] The Canboro Road

[2] General Brock

Feb. 25th

I saw Capt. Elliott[4] last night at the Dance, he told me he had a letter from Archange to Theresa.

(Askin Papers Burton Historical Library Detroit)

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN SR.

40 Mile Creek Feby 28th 1812

Dear Father

I am now on my way from York where I have been some time and from which place I wrote to you a few days ago. A person who I have met here on his way to Detroit gives me a favorable opportunity of writing to you, which I embrace tho I have little to say. The Legislature have done little this Session as yet and as the house is soon to be dissolved there will not be much done. A new Militia Act is passed. In every Regt. there are to be two flank companies to consist of one hundred men each which are to be out six days in every month for the purpose of training until they are perfect in their exercise regular soldiers will be employed to drill them. I believe the house has voted £5000 to the President to be laid out in such a manner as he thinks best, for having the Militia trained.

A law respecting travellers on the road meeting has also

passed the house, all persons meeting in carriages or sleighs are to give half the road and after December next no one is to drive a sleigh without Bells.

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[3] Entitled "An Act to Prevent Damages to Travellers on the Highways in this Province."

[4] Mathew Elliott, then member of the Legislative Assembly for the County of Essex.

Mr Nichol[1] was committed to Gaol in York by a warrant from the Speaker of the House of Commons the day before I left it this was for writing something to Major Halton[2] offensive to them in justification of his conduct when wrongfully accused by that House of not having accounted for Public money in his hands—it's so lengthy a business that I shall not enter more fully into it, as I should then not be able to give you all the particulars of it[3]—and you will have the whole of it from the members when they return home, which will be soon.

Orders have been received lately from Below to fortify York I met the Engineer here this evening from Niagara on his way there (probably for that purpose).

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

By a proclamation dated at York on 25th February, 1812, the following persons were appointed commissioners in the Niagara District to carry into effect the Act recently passed for the prevention of seditious conduct: Joseph Edwards of Niagara, John Warren, Sen. of Bertie John Warren of Bertie, Samuel Street of Willoughby Thomas Clark of Stamford, Thomas Dickson of Queenston, William Crooks of Grimsby and Samuel Hatt of Ancaster all of them being magistrates. The letter of Thomas Clark acknowledging his appointment, has been preserved.

FROM THOMAS CLARK TO JAMES BROCK

Stamford March 12th, 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ulto inclosing a Commission from His Honor the President empowering me to carry into effect an Act passed in the Fourth Session of the Third Provincial Parliament of this Province—entitled an Act for the better securing this Province against all seditious attempts or designs to disturb the tranquillity thereof

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[1] Robert Nichol, then a commissioner for highways in the London District

[2] William Halton civil secretary to Lieut.-Governor Gore

[3] See Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society Vol XIX, pp 10-15

To which Commissions please make known to His Honor the President that strict attention will be paid by

Sir

Your most obedt. servt.

Thomas Clark

James Brock, Esqr. &c., &c. &c.

(Dominion Archives. Sundries, 1812)

The following petition from three enterprising inhabitants throws some light on economic conditions.

To His Honor Isaac Brock, Esquire, President administering the Government of the Province of Upper Canada and Major General commanding His Majesty's Forces within the same.

The Petition of James Macklem, John Fanning and Benjamin Hardison of the District of Niagara, Gentlemen.

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioners, four years since, laid before His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Gore a Petition praying for a Grant of a certain mill seat lying below the mouth of the river Welland or Chippawa in the Township of Stamford wherefrom His Excellency promised that he would do everything which laid in his power in our behalf but probably owing to a multiplicity of business which engaged his attention we never obtained a final answer on the subject.

Your petitioners have resided in this Province about twenty years during which period it has been their highest ambition to promote its true Interest and Prosperity by the encouragement of its population and by the promotion of Works of Public utility which exertions, they conceive have been crowned with a Success in most respects equal to their wishes. One of your Petitioners, John Fanning has been at heavy expenses in erecting Mills in this part of the Province particularly one at Black Creek which was consumed by fire in February last whereby he sustained a loss of two thousand Bushels of Wheat.

It is impossible for us to point out the great want of Mills in this part of the Province the Mills now erected at the Falls and at Bridgewater cannot manufacture near the quantity of Grain now raised in this Quarter of the Country and there are now in the aforesaid Mills upwards of twenty thousand bushels of Wheat though the inhabitants cannot obtain sufficient Flour for their own consumption. The and

Mills being possessed by a company who adopt such Rules and Regulations respecting them as best suit themselves, the inhabitants having no alternative but to comply with those Measures consider themselves much aggrieved and burthened.[4] Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honor will be pleased to take this Grievance into your wise consideration together with the aforesaid Petition laid before His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore.

But if your Honor do not think proper to grant to your Petitioners the said Mill seat we most earnestly hope and pray that your Honor will not cause it to be granted to the aforesaid Company[5] but to some worthy Person wholly unconnected with said Company.

If, in the opinion of your Honor this Petition would have greater weight with you by having the support of five hundred of the most respectable inhabitants in this Quarter their Signatures for that purpose may be obtained within a few Days.

We further pray that your Honor will be pleased to cause the Honorable Council to take this into their wise consideration and give us an answer to our former Petition which was ably supported by the most respectable inhabitants in this part of the Province.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

James Macklem[6]
John Fanning[7]
Benjamin Hardison[8]

District of Niagara
March 31st, 1812

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812.)

The amended Militia Act was formally assented to on March 6th, when the provincial parliament was prorogued

and very soon after orders were sent to the commanding officers of all regiments to assemble their men and call for volunteers to form the flank companies to be trained for six days in each month until reported efficient. Several of the reports of these officers have been preserved.

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[4] This discontent seems to have found expression in the election of John Fanning as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln in May, 1812. He died soon after and was succeeded by Isaac Swayze.

[5] Apparently Clark and Street.

[6] He had immigrated from Pennsylvania about 1794 and established a store at Chippawa. (See Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XXVI, p. 251.)

[7] Fanning had come to Upper Canada about 1781, from South Carolina, where he forfeited property as a Loyalist, valued at £1133 10s, and married the daughter of a Loyalist. He had managed an inn at Chippawa for several years.

[8] He had lived in the province since 1776 and had been a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln and Norfolk, 1797-1800. See Papers and Records, Ontario Historical Society, XXIV, p. 76.

FROM COLONEL RALFE CLENCH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Niagara 1st Apr. 1812

Sir

I enclose the return of the First Regiment of the County of Lincoln Militia by which you will see our total strength with the number of our loyal men who volunteered. You will likewise notice the great number who did not and I am happy to say that the major part of those persons are people from the United States lately with a few of our malcontent settlers in the towns of Niagara and Queenston and village of St. Davids where Captain Robertson's[4] mostly reside.

I also enclose a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Kerr[5] which he has stated to me personally to be his resignation. This you will please lay before His Honor the President, and I will thank you to let me know his pleasure thereon as soon as possible.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Stamford, April 3rd, 1812

Sir

I had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ulto. In consequence of which the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia under my command was called out and met yesterday in the Township of Thorold when the supplementary Militia Law was explained as fully as in my power. Herein you have the field return of the regiment by which it will appear that out of 550 men, 522 volunteered to be trained and exercised in the flank companies when and in what manner may be directed by His Honor the President.

By the return you will perceive that two of my companies are without captains. Captains Warner & Reilly[6] having some time ago resigned from infirmity & old age. Should His Honor the President think proper to appoint others in their place give me leave to recommend Mr Robert Grant of Queenston who has formerly been a captain of militia in the Western District, and Lieut John Decow the oldest lieutenant in my Regiment

---

[4] William Robertson promoted to be Major 1 June, 1812 and Lieutenant-Colonel, 27 June, 1812.

[5] Dr. Robert Kerr.

[6] Probably Christian Warner and John Reilly, both of whom had been sergeants in Butler's Rangers.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN WARREN[1] TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Fort Erie 12th April 1812

Sir,

I have had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ultimo with the supplementary to the Militia Law passed the last Session of the Legislature saying

That His Honor the President was anxious that the provisions therein contained should be explained to the men under my command, and that whatever measures His Honor might find it expedient to adopt he would dispense with a ballot until the last emergency

I have great satisfaction in acquainting you that the behavior of the 3rd Regiment of Lincoln Militia has precluded the necessity of a ballot. Four companies of the Regiment are resident in the Townships of Bertie and Humberstone the other four companies reside in Willoughby Crowland and Wainfleet on the east side of the Chippawa to the distance of thirty miles up that creek. It therefore became me to consider the ease of the men by lessening the fatigue of their assembling at too great a distance from their farms. The first four companies were ordered to assemble in Bertie on the 9th instant and the other four companies to form at the mouth of the Chippawa on the 10th at both of which places I attended.

Of the companies of Bertie and Humberstone every man voluntarily turned out to the number of two hundred and six. The four companies at Chippawa also behaved well, out of two hundred and eleven on parade only five stood fast.

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[1] John Warren, Sr., had come to Canada with the 8th Regiment as a drummer but was appointed about 1780 assistant commissary at Fort Erie and held that appointment until his death in 1813. He was one of the first Justices of the Peace in the district of Nassau and the first Collector of Customs at the port of Fort Erie Passage, with an outpost at Long Point, and inspector of pot and pearl ashes.

While the circles were formed at both places and I had read and explained the acts, the officers were called upon to step forward and take the oath and after setting the example not the least hesitation was made, and every man, officers and privates stood around while Messrs. Street and Crowell Wilson administered it

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

A circular letter from Brock was sent to twenty-five officers commanding regiments of militia, including the five regiments of the County of Lincoln, giving them carefully considered instructions for the organization and training of the flank companies to be formed in their regiments.

Head Quarters, York, 8th April, 1812

Sir

The power which is vested in the person administering the government by the amended act of the militia passed the last session of the Provincial Parliament of forming two flank companies to be taken indiscriminately from the battalion, being limited to the end of the ensuing session would almost deter me from incurring public expense upon a system which will cease to operate before its utility and efficacy can well be ascertained.

But being anxious at this important crisis to organize an armed force with a view to future exigencies and likewise to demonstrate by practical experience the degree of facility with which it may be trained for service, I have to request you to adopt immediate measures for forming and completing from among such men as voluntarily offer to serve two companies not to exceed 1 captain, 2 subalterns, 2 sergeants, 1 drummer and 35 rank and file each in the regiment under your command.

You will have the goodness to recommend who you conceive the best qualified to undertake this important duty. The nomination of the subalterns is left to your discretion.

Such other regiments as are conveniently situated to receive military instruction shall have an opportunity offered them of shewing their ardor in the public service which cannot fail creating a laudable emulation among the different corps.

Assisted by your active prudence and intelligence, I entertain the pleasing hope of meeting with very considerable success and of being able to establish the sound policy of rendering permanent at the end of the present war a code of military instruction little burdensome to individuals and every way calculated to secure a powerful internal defence against hostile aggression.

Printed rules and regulations for your future guidance shall be forwarded as soon as possible, the most simple and at the same time the most useful movements have been selected for the practice of the militia

Experience has shewn the absolute necessity of adopting every possible precaution to preserve in a proper state the arms issued to the militia and of guarding against the heavy defalcations that have heretofore occurred.

For which purpose you are authorized to prepare one or more depots in situations the most safe and convenient for assembling and drilling the men by squads and where the arms are to be lodged after each day of exercise

You are allowed to charge in your contingent account at the rate of five pounds yearly for every twenty muskets issued for the use of the men, which sum it is supposed will prove ample to defray every expense of keeping the arms and accoutrements in a complete state of repair

You will make application to the officer commanding at Fort George[1] for the number of arms and accoutrements wanting to complete the men actually engaged to serve in the flank companies and that officer has been instructed to comply with your requisition upon your transmitting duplicate receipts, one of which is to be forwarded to head quarters that you may become responsible for the articles delivered to your order, at the same time the most liberal construction will be given to any representation accounting for such contingencies as are incident to the service

John Clark[2] has been appointed to perform the duties of adjutant under your command Should you find him incompetent to the task you will feel it your duty to report the circumstances from whatever source it may arise

I cannot dismiss the subject without expressing my expectations that your knowledge of the localities of the country will enable you to make such arrangements as will give the utmost facility to this important object in view without subjecting the men to any material inconvenience Coming generously forward with an offer of their services they are the more entitled to every consideration

Not only the place but likewise the time for assembling the companies or squads will be strictly attended to by you. It is my earnest wish that the little the men have to learn

may be acquired by way of a pastime and not looked upon in the light of an irksome restraint. The generality of the inhabitants being already acquainted with the use of the musket have the less to learn. You may therefore under the existing circumstances limit the parade of the companies to three times in each month.

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[1] Other regiments were authorized to draw arms, &c. from Kingston, York and Amherstburg according to convenience

[2] For the 1st Regiment of Lincoln James Kerby was appointed adjutant of the 2nd, Henry Trout of the 3rd John Taylor of the 4th, and John W McIntyre of the 5th Lieut.-Colonel Johnson Butler commanded the 4th and Major Richard Hatt, the 5th Lincoln.

A little attention on the part of the men will very soon enable you to reduce even that short term of attendance. The chief object of the flank companies is to have constantly in readiness a force composed of loyal, brave and respectable young men, so far instructed as to enable the Government on any emergency to engraft such portion of the militia as may be necessary on a stock capable of giving aid in forming them for military service. To your prudence and exertions I confidently look for the attainment of a system so evidently conducive to the safety and tranquillity of the province.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C.M.D. 31)

The following documents give some indication of the care taken by Brock to appoint trusty returning officers and fix the date of the polling at a time agreeable to the candidates favored by him.

Queenston, 13th May, 1812

Received from Archibald Oliver, Corporal 41st Regiment on this Thirteenth day of May, 1812 one parcel containing Writs and Instructions for me as Returning Officer of Members for the Third Riding of the County of Lincoln, to serve in the new Parliament at the ensuing Election.

James Kerby

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

Burford 6th May 1812

Received from the bearers two Natives, the packet containing the Writ of Election, &c.

Sir your most
obedient and humble
Servant

(Unaddressed) William D. Bowen

(Dominion Archives, Sundries 1812)

FROM J B ROUSSEAU TO JAMES BROCK

Ancaster 19th May 1812

Sir

I enclose you two receipts one from Mr Wm D. Bowen the other from Mr John Bostwick, acknowledging having received their Writs of Election.

Mr Hepburn's[1] and Durand's I delivered myself. I took care at your direction not to forward Mr Bostwick's so early. But the Man that I sent to Col. Nichol with Col Talbot's letter got there sooner than I expected of course he received it a few days earlier than you wished. I hope it may be no ways material.

I enclose you a letter from Mr Bostwick also one for His Honor the President.

I am Sir
your very obedient
humble servant

J B Rousseau

James Brock, Esqr

(Dominion Archives, Sundries 1812)

A letter from Charles Askin to his father announced the purchase of the mills and adjacent lands in the township of Canboro.

Canborough May 22nd, 1812

Dear Father

I have been anxiously waiting to have an opportunity to write to inform you that I had jointly with Alex Hamilton purchased of George Hepburn (who has lately bought of Mr Canby) the Mills[2] and one thousand acres of land situated near them which we have for some time past leased. For these we are to pay £2000 N Y C.[3] in ten years in goods at retail price payable by instalment—this I do not conceive to be more than about £1500 in money and the land at the lowest valuation is worth 10/ an acre which would reduce the Mills, dwelling house, Distillery and other house to £1000 which is thought very little for them, had it been in my power to have consulted you before I made the bargain I should have done it but it was impossible to do it for unless it was made immediately when it was proposed there was a great chance of its falling through and we ought to have declined making the bargain I was making Alexr Hamilton lose what he thought a good one for he would have nothing to do with the business unless I joined him—George Hamilton bought 14,000 acres of this Township, on part of which were the Mills, for which he pays £7000 in 5 years with interest—this bargain is considered an excellent one by Mr Thomas Clark Mr Dickson[*] & some others who have speculated a good deal themselves in land & know the value of it well—Though I have no society here and have little or no amusement, I am well pleased with my situation for I am kept busy and have not time to be lonesome and I think my prospects of making something are greater than they were in any situation I have been in—I intend to leave this in a month to go and pay you a visit and should I have time I shall go to St Josephs to see Johny[**]

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[1] Probably William G. Hepburn.

[2] Probably the mills built by Canby on Moore's Creek. (See Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society Vol. XXIV pp. 85-86.)

[3] $16,000.

I am in haste and must conclude Please give my love to my dear Mother my Brothers and Sister

(Askin Papers Burton Historical Library Detroit)

A list of ships on Lake Ontario in 1811 1812, compiled from returns of lighthouse dues collected at Niagara and York, shows that commerce was actively conducted by water

Schooner	Ontario	87 tons
"	Niagara	55 tons
"	Collector	50½ tons
"	Prince Edward	77 tons
"	Julia	53 tons
"	Fair American	82½ tons
"	Governor Simcoe	136 tons
Sloop	Elizabeth	48 tons
Schooner	Lady Gore	46 tons
"	Genl Hunter	36 tons
"	Mary	35 tons
"	Two Brothers	36 tons
"	Eagle	26 tons
"	British Queen	23 tons
"	Sophia	25 tons
"	Lark	16 tons
Sloop	Marianne	36 tons
Schooner	Experiment	55 tons
Sloop	Enterprise	21 tons
Schooner	Charles and Ann	99 tons
"	Lord Nelson	46 tons
Sloop	Republican	17 tons
Schooner	Mary	51 tons

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[*] William Dickson of Niagara.

[**] His half-brother John Askin, Jr. storekeeper for the Indian Department at St. Joseph's Island

The Ontario, Niagara, Collector, John, Fair American, Experiment, Charlotte and Ann, Lord Nelson and Mary were purchased by the Navy Department of the United States and turned into ships of war. Several others were employed as transports by the British naval authorities.

The remarkable success in recruiting the flank companies of the militia with volunteers was promptly acknowledged by General Brock in a public manner.

Circular   Government House

York, 25th May 1812

Militia General Order

The very satisfactory reports made to the President by the officers commanding corps of the spirit and zeal manifested by the men in volunteering their services for the flank companies has afforded His Honor the most lively gratification and confirmed the opinion which he was always disposed to entertain of their determination to defend bravely their country and in emulation of their veteran fathers evince by deeds the ardent loyalty they have so often professed. Conduct so honorable and dignified has not failed making a deep impression on the Provincial Government and to increase if possible their anxious desire to contribute everything in their power towards the comfort and happiness of the people.

With this view they have humbly solicited His Royal Highness the Prince Regent for his gracious permission to allot to the wives and children of such soldiers, militia and marines who may be killed in the present contest[1] a portion of the waste lands of the Crown and to afford relief to such as may be disabled in the service for whom no provision is otherwise provided.

By command of the President

Æneas Shaw

Adj. Genl. Militia

Upper Canada

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, M.D. 31)

A letter from George Hamilton to Thomas McKee, apparently about the middle of May, gives a striking account of military activity.

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[1] War was not actually declared by the United States until June 18.

Queenston May — 1812.

The Americans are assembling & sending troops as fast as in their power. A company came in yesterday & one the day before & another expected to-day & another to-morrow & so on to the end of the week. I can assure that the river has at present quite a martial appearance. The two forts so close below, the Royal George at anchor between them, the American frigate[1] expected up every day, a large scow & bateau filled with soldiers hauling stone for the garrison at York, huts with soldiers on one side, an encampment at McBride's on the other, another at Miller's & stragglers at Lewiston. Capt. Powell[2] & riflemen at the great guns, Crooks[3] & his flankers in the yard here all yesterday, Alexr.[4] & his troopers on their way to the 12, McEwen[5] and his flankers there also. Capt. Bullock[6] is indefatigable with the flankers on the mountain & with Col. Clark has been drilling them every day for this week past. If the Yankees come after all the Devil is in them, especially when my troopers[7] take the field we'll chop off their heads like heads of thistles.

(Toronto Public Library)

A letter from George Hamilton to his father-in-law, contains further details of the active preparations in progress for the defence of the frontier.

FROM GEORGE HAMILTON TO WILLIAM JARVIS

Niagara 5th June, 1812

Dear Sir,

The Royal George is now at the wharf with 250 recruits belonging to the 41st Regiment and the Gloucester in sight with 50 more on board, which you will agree with me is no contemptible addition to our forces here. Yesterday we had a grand display on the plains. Col. Procter with the 41st Regt. in the centre, Major Merritt with his light horse on the right and Captain Powell with his company of artillery on the left and to do them no more than justice they fired remarkably well. The General[1] appeared highly pleased with them as also the Sheriff's troop. The General was pleased to say the other day he wished another troop to be raised in Stamford and from that to Fort Erie and wished me to take the command of it which I had not the slightest objection to, informing me that Merritt was to be Major of the whole. As Alexander [Hamilton] who is Captain of the troop here had gone to Long Point and did not make his appearance I took possession of his jacket and accoutrements which luckily suited me exactly and appeared with Merritt as Captain of the troop and was complimented on my appearance and the new dress. I had taken care however beforehand to state the case fairly and on waiting on the General afterwards he did not seem displeased but directed me to call on him to-morrow and he would present me with my commission. I dined with him afterwards and am now here again only waiting his return from the garrison to be dubbed captain and the intent of this long preamble is to beg of you to assist me in getting my accoutrements. --- --- ---

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[1] The Oneida

[2] Captain John Powell, 1st Lincoln Artillery

[3] Captain James Crooks, 1st Lincoln

[4] Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1st Troop Niagara Light Dragoons

[5] Captain John McEwen, 1st Lincoln

[6] Captain Richard Bullock, 41st Regiment, Adjutant-General of Militia, 1838-1839

[7] He was then enlisting a second Troop for the Niagara Light Dragoons, which was never completed.

(Toronto Public Library)

The first act of hostility on Lake Ontario was the capture of the merchant schooner Lord Nelson, owned by William and James Crooks of Grimsby, by the United States brig of war Oneida, acting under special instructions from superior authority, of which the following official account was given by her commander, Captain Melancthon T. Woolsey, in a letter to Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy:

U. S. Brig Oneida
Sackets Harbour Roads,
June 9th, 1812

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I sailed on the 3rd instant on a cruise to the Westward. On the 4th (off Pulteney Ville) discovered three sail to windward apparently standing in for Genesee River—gave chase to them but night coming on and the weather being too hazey to run in for the mouth of the river hauled off shore for the night under short sail. At day light on the 5th discovered two schooners (supposed to be two of the three we had chased the day before) standing in for the land. At 7 p.m. we brought to one of the schooners which proved to be the Lord Nelson from Prescot (a port opposite Ogdensburgh on the St. Lawrence) said to be bound to Newark in Canada, she had no papers on board other than a loose journal and a bill of lading of a part of her Cargo, but no register license or clearance. w[h]ether it was intended to smuggle her Cargo on our shores or w[h]ether she was hovering along our shores to take on board property for the Canada market in violation of the Embargo law I was not able to determine but appearances were such as to warrant a suspicion of her intention to smuggle both ways. I accordingly took her crew out and sent her in with my gunner on board as prize master to this port. After dispatching her I stood off shore in chase of the other schooner which the master of the Lord Nelson informed me was the Mary Hatt[1] also a British schooner but finding that she had crossed the line, I bore up for this port in order to lay up the prize and make my report to the Department. All the proofs which I can collect respecting her voyage I will transmit without delay to the District Attorney.

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[1] Brock

In compliance with the recommendation from the President of the United States on April 1 the Congress had passed an act laying a general embargo for sixty days on all vessels then in port or hereafter arriving as a preliminary to a declaration of war. The instructions sent to Woolsey soon after were so vague as to enable him to make seizures at discretion.

Navy Department, April 8, 1812

Sir,

You will herewith receive a copy of the act laying an embargo &c. passed the 4th instant. You will use all the means in your power to enforce this law.

Advise and co-operate with the collector of customs.

The proper objects of seizure are all vessels acting or found under such circumstances as may satisfy a strong suspicion of the intention to act in violation of this law.

In enforcing this law we are not to violate the territorial jurisdiction of a foreign state.

All vessels seized under this law are to be sent into port for adjudication; the papers found on board of them are to be placed in the hands of the district attorney who will thereupon proceed according to law.

Paul Hamilton

M. T. Woolsey Lieut Commanding
Brig Oneida, Sackett's Harbor New York[2]

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[1] Named in honour of a daughter of Richard Hatt of Ancaster.

[2] Statement of the seizure of the British Schooner Lord Nelson, by an American Vessel of War on the 5th June, 1812 thirteen days before the late war with the United States, Hamilton Journal and Express Office 1841 p. 12

The Lord Nelson was a new ship built at Niagara in 1811 and very well constructed. As soon as her seizure was made known to them one of the owners went to Sackett's Harbour and offered to give security to abide the decision of the court of the United States on the charge of a violation of the embargo but the release of the ship was refused. The declaration of war soon after put an end to all intercourse and under an interlocutory decree the Lord Nelson was sold and purchased for the Navy Department of the United States. She was converted into a gunboat, renamed the Scourge, and armed with ten guns. The purchase money $2,008.25 was paid into the hands of Theron Rudd, clerk of the court to await a final decision of that court as to its disposal. On the night of August 9, 1813, while carrying all sail to escape from the British squadron, the Scourge was struck by a heavy squall and overset with the loss of most of her crew of fifty men. After the conclusion of peace, a claim was made for compensation for an illegal seizure and in July 1817 a decree of the court was obtained for the payment to the owners of the money held by the clerk, but it was discovered that he had appropriated it to his own use and become bankrupt. After the death of William Crooks, the suit was prosecuted against the government of the United States by Hon. James Crooks, his brother, and after his death by their heirs and after the death of those heirs by their heirs. They valued the schooner at $5,000 and her cargo at $2,943.76. The claim was kept before Congress for nearly a hundred years, its justice was repeatedly admitted and two Presidents urged its payment in messages. Finally on the 1st May 1914 judgment was given to the claimant in the sum of $5,000 with interest at four per cent per annum for ninety-two years, making in all nearly $24,000.

Returns compiled early in July showed that the flank companies of most of the Lincoln regiments were much over the strength originally authorized. On July 3 Captain Samuel Hatt's and Captain James Durand's flank companies of the 5th Lincoln were each reported to consist of three officers, two sergeants and seventy-two rank and file, while Captain Jacob A. Ball's battalion company of the same regiment only numbered two officers, three sergeants and twenty-two rank and file, and Captain John D. Servos's numbered three officers, three sergeants and twenty-five rank and file. Nine hundred men from the flank companies of the Lincoln and York militia were ordered to march to the Niagara frontier and arranged in four divisions, the first or right division to be stationed at Fort Erie, the second at

Chippawa, the third at Queenston and the fourth at Fort George. The strength of the detachment for the eight division was fixed at three hundred men and each of the others at two hundred. The first and second divisions were to receive orders through Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Clark and the third and fourth through Colonel William Claus. On July 7 the third division was composed of four officers, three sergeants, one drummer and one hundred rank and file of the 41st Regiment, commanded by Capt. P. L. Chambers, one sergeant and three troopers of the Niagara Light Dragoons, a captain, a sergeant and twelve rank and file of the Lincoln Artillery, Captain Samuel Hatt's flank company of the 5th Lincoln of three officers, three sergeants and sixty-three rank and file, Captain James Durand's flank company of the 5th Lincoln of three officers, two sergeants and sixty-six rank and file, Captain John Chisholm's flank company of the 2nd York, of three officers, two sergeants and thirty-four rank and file; and Captain William Applegarth's flank company of the 2nd York of two officers, three sergeants and forty-five rank and file. This body of militia, numbering 246 of all ranks, was placed under the command of Captain Hatt.

The detachment forming the fourth division consisted of Captain James Crooks's flank company of the 1st Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and sixty-two rank and file, Captain John McEwen's flank company of the 1st Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and sixty-seven rank and file, Captain Lyons's rifle company of three officers, two sergeants and twenty-four rank and file, Captain Abraham Nelles's flank company of the 4th Lincoln of three officers, three sergeants and seventy-seven rank and file, and Captain William Crooks's company of the 4th Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and seventy-two rank and file. Making a force of 334 of all ranks, it was commanded by Lieut. Colonel Johnson Butler[1] of the 4th Lincoln.

The roll book of Captain John D. Servos's company of militia contains a list of persons excused or incapacitated from military service which is not without some local interest.

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[1] He died on service, 1st September, 1812, and was buried in the family burial plot.

Roll of males in the limits of Captain John D. Servos's company 1st Regt. (Lincoln Militia) September 7, 1812.

Age		Infirm	Remarks
67	Peter Ball		Half pay officer
56	Thomas Butler[1]		do. do.
60	Bernard Frey[2]		do. do.
62	John Clement[3]		do. do.
46	Benjamin Pickard		Miller
55	Frederick Manual		Militia officer resigned
26	Charles Rolls[4]		Militia officer in England
76	Joseph Anderson		
58	Joshua Ferris		
57	John Cutten	Infirm	
51	George Huson		
21	John Huson	Infirm	
62	John Bone, Sen.	do.	
40	John Bone		In the gallery
62	Ezekiel Cudney		
57	George Lawrence[5]		Capt. militia resigned
52	Robert Donaldson	Infirm	
48	James Clement[6]		Militia officer resigned
23	John Thompson	Infirm	
61	Robert Thompson	do.	
63	Amos McKinney		
55	Marlow Riley	Infirm	
53	Jesse Loder	do.	
50	John Ball		Magistrate
64	John Silver		
69	Castle Cotter[7]		
60	Michael Erlinger		
54	Samuel Perks		Armourer
56	Garret Slingerland	Infirm	
54	John Secord	Deaf	
71	Johnathan Lawrence		
60	John Hays	Infirm	
58	John Wolman	do	
46	Josiah Corlins	do.	

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[1] Died December 1812

[2] Killed in action, 21 November 1812

[3] Died 1845 aged 87

[4] Died 1867 aged 81

[5] Died 1848 aged 91

[6] Died March 1813, aged 49

[7] Died 1838 aged 96

The termination of the armistice by the government of the United States was announced by General Brock in a forceful district general order.

Fort George, Sept. 8th, 1812

D. G. O.

Major General Brock was disposed to view the armistice as the forerunner of a restoration of peace and amity with the United States. The pretexts on which their declaration of war was chiefly founded having been removed by the British Government and an opening offered by it to an adjustment of all difficulties of minor importance between the two countries. But in vain has Great Britain thus held out the hand of conciliation. It has been rejected. The President of the United States having thought fit to direct their troops to resort again to active warfare and what motive can exist for his authorizing a renewal of hostilities at the same time too (as is confidently asserted) that he has sent an ambassador to England to treat for peace.

Is it to facilitate its attainment that he by his own voluntary act places the two countries in a situation to inflict mutually the horrors of war thereby to have their minds the more embittered toward each other? Perhaps indeed, he may imagine that by conquest on the side of Canada he can indemnify the United States for the loss to which they were exposed on the Atlantic side from the superiority of the naval power of Great Britain and that with a portion of her provinces in their possession more favorable terms would be obtained in a negotiation for peace but the militia of this province have too just and manly a sense of what they owe to their own personal dignity and independence to be disposed of at the will of the chief magistrate of any foreign country. They will not sink to the degradation of unresistingly becoming a make weight to be thrown by his hand into the scale—such baseness belongs not to them. They have already offered to the world an instance of what can be effected by the aid of their loyalty and valour and Major General Brock relies with confidence on the continued exertion of these ennobling qualities for defeating any design on this province and for contributing no less honorably for themselves than usefully to their families to their King and their country towards bringing the contest in which the implacable enmity of the American Government has engaged us to a favorable issue. By order

Thos. Evans
B.M

D G O

Major Genl Brock commanding will inspect the barracks occupied by the militia in this garrison in the course of to-morrow

By order

Thos Evans

B M

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers 1812)

The reluctance of many of the recent immigrants to perform military duty is shown by the following letter from the commanding officer of the second regiment of Lincoln militia.

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO CAPTAIN CHARLES ASKIN

Chippawa, September 24th 1812

Sir

I wrote you on the 8th of this month that 40 of the men attached to your company had not attended at this place to be inspected & take the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act. Some of these however have since attended at this place and taken the oath. Those of the inclosed list I have neither seen nor heard of. You will therefore see that they and each of them immediately take & subscribe before some magistrate the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act and according to the militia General Order to that effect & so soon as possible afterwards report to me accordingly and be particular if any there be who may refuse to take the oath.

I am Sir

your very obedt servt

Thomas Clark Lt.-Col.

2nd Lincoln Militia

To Capt Charles Askin
or officer commanding
company of militia at
Canbetry & Lower Haldimand.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers 1812)

An unpublished letter from Sir George Prevost to General Brock demonstrates his earnest desire to avoid further hostilities by refraining carefully from all offensive operations

Head Quarters, Montreal
30th September, 1812

Sir

I have been honored with your letter of the 18th inst Having received information that the revocation of the Orders in Council the conciliatory disposition shown by His Majesty's Government towards the United States, and the knowledge of the pacific advances made have produced throughout America the best effects upon the public opinion so as to render the war extremely unpopular, I should consider it extremely unfortunate if any temptation or provocation should induce you to abandon those defensive operations suited to the present state of the contest and which it has become both prudent and politic to persevere in observing

I can derive no satisfaction from any result that may attend Captain Muir's movement against Fort Wayne however favorable to our arms as it does not accord with my instructions to you founded upon those I have received from the King's Ministers and is moreover not calculated upon the present military resources of this command.

I supposed an extreme case when I desired a co-operation from the forces in Upper Canada such as the evacuation of Montreal and the King's troops falling back upon Quebec before an overwhelming force It is in that event a combination of movement upon Lower Canada with your disposable force may have the effect I then mentioned

A very unpleasant report has reached my ear of want of decision and energy in the conduct of Major Heathcote commanding the Newfoundland Fencibles upon a late occasion when the detachment under his orders was attacked near Prescott It may be proper to institute an inquiry into the circumstances of that affair and if misconduct is established to mark it with reprobation You will therefore give the necessary orders thereon to Colonel Vincent

I shall not fail in communicating to Sir John Warren (our appointed negotiator with the United States) the sentiments you entertain respecting the Indians but I cannot disguise from you that it is my opinion that the present policy of Great Britain being earnestly to get rid of the difficulties occasioned by the war with America little disposition will be manifested to espouse with warmth the cause of our Indian allies. I may be mistaken but Sir John must be requested to transmit to the Secretary of State the memorial sent him which had been presented to me by the Montreal merchants. You must therefore avoid committing our Government either by promise or treaty but on the contrary restrain and control their measures so as to prevent that irritation in the United States which may render their very name an insurmountable obstacle to future arrangements in their behalf.

I have complied with your request with regard to the advance of £5,000 to the Receiver General of Upper Canada for the civil expenditure of that province and as I understand from Lieutenant Colonel Nichol that he is to be furnished with a letter of credit from the Receiver General to enable him to make the purchases of the necessaries you want,[4] I have directed the Commissary General to advance to Lieutenant Colonel Nichol to the amount of £5,000 should he require it on the account of the Receiver General should he require less than that amount the balance will be transmitted by him in army bills to the Receiver General. Colonel Vincent having also signified to me the necessity of furnishing Mr Ross the Commissary at Kingston, with £4,000 for the subsistence of the militia and paying the fresh beef contractors for Kingston, Leeds and Cornwall and other expenses of those districts, I have directed that amount in army bills to be sent to him and Lieut Colonel Nichol will take charge of them. The Receiver General will of course forward to the Commissary General his receipt for the £5,000 including as a part thereof whatever amount Lieutenant Colonel Nichol shall have received on his account.

(Dominion Archives, C 1218, pp. 443-445.)

A short letter from Colonel Claus evidently written in much haste, unaddressed and misdated, giving an inaccurate account of the capture of two British ships at anchor near Fort Erie has been preserved.

Fort George 8th Oct. 1812

Dr Sir

On the 14th Ultmo Col Elliott with Captain McKee & about 600 Indians left Amherstburg on an Expedition against Fort Wayne on the head of one of the branches of the Miami & was to be followed by Captain Muir with about 300 of the 41st Regt and Militia. The enclosed copy of Col. Elliot's letter to me of the 3rd Instant which I send this day will shew you the failure of the expedition

On the night of the 9 Inst a number of boats from Buffalo Creek made a descent on the Lake & drop[p]ed down to Fort Erie & cut adrift the brig Detroit & sc[h]ooner

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Blankets, clothing and camp equipage for the militia on duty

Caledonia [illegible] vessel—the form[er] [illegible] on the point on [illegible] brought to some of our people—the other on the Black Rock where she sunk as low as the water would allow being shot in the hull from our side. The Detroit altho' several [illegible] attempts by us to be got off was set on fire by the Americans & burnt up. Lieut. [illegible] a brave young man who commanded the Detroit after having both hands was [illegible]. I have not been able to learn the true account, it must have been a bloody time.

(Claus Papers, copy by Miss Catherine Claus.)

Late in the afternoon of October 13, General Van Rensselaer sent over a flag of truce to make enquiries about wounded officers and soldiers and this was followed by a written message proposing to send over surgeons to attend them and proposing an armistice for three days. General Sheaffe suggested in reply that all wounded prisoners should be removed across the river on condition of their not serving again until properly exchanged and agreed to a cessation of firing for three days. In a second letter written next day he proposed a partial exchange of prisoners and that the militia captured at Queenston excluding those who might be exchanged, "shall be restored to their homes and families under an engagement not to serve against Great Britain or her allies during the war or until regularly exchanged."

Van Rensselaer readily assented to this proposal and sent an officer to make suitable arrangements which were completed on October 15. Next day General Sheaffe proposed an extension of the armistice until the exchange of prisoners could be completed and General Brock buried. His opponent cordially agreed to extend the armistice to October 19 and announced that he had given orders for firing salutes for Brock's funeral at Lewiston and Fort Niagara that afternoon. The correspondence had been conducted on both sides with much politeness. On the same day Van Rensselaer turned over the command of his troops to General Alexander Smyth of the United States army who adopted a different tone in the interchange of letters.

FROM BRIG.-GEN. SMYTH TO MAJOR GEN. SHEAFFE

Head Quarters, Lewiston 17th Oct. 1812

Sir,

A letter addressed by you to Major Gen. V. Rensselaer has been put into my hands wherein you propose to exchange a Lieut. of militia and a private for an Indian savage taken a prisoner by our troops

I regret receiving from you a proposition to which I cannot accede.

(Dominion Archives, C 688 B, p. 135.)

General Sheaffe lost no time in replying at considerable length.

FROM MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE TO BRIG. GENERAL SMYTH (Draft)

Fort George, 17th Oct. 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your note of this date and regret that I have made a proposition to you that you find it necessary to reject, especially as it was made at the particular request of B. General Wadsworth. As that has failed I presume that the prior agreement respecting the Indian in question which was entered into by Colonel Winder still remains in force, and that the Indian will be sent back to-morrow. Not yet having heard of the return of the prisoners who were to have been sent over from Buffalo or Black Rock early this morning according to the assurance given by Col. Winder and to whom prisoners have already been sent as an exchange, I request if they have been intentionally detained that you will be pleased to inform me of the cause.

Mr. Hamilton who has been some time detained at Buffalo has brothers and other near relations in this vicinity who have heard some accounts of the state of his health by which they are much alarmed. I therefore permit one of his brothers to go over with a flag to Buffalo to obtain some information of him and I beg leave to propose that Mr. Hamilton shall be allowed to join his friends, an officer of a rank that may be deemed equivalent being released from his parole in exchange for him.

(Dominion Archives, C 688 B, 133-4.)

Brig. General Wadsworth, who was still a prisoner of war, then applied for the liberation on their parole of two officers of the regular army of the United States, who had not been included in the original agreement, which related only to officers of the militia, and Sheaffe readily assented.

FROM BRIG-GENERAL WADSWORTH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE

Newark Oct 17 1812.

Sir

Major J R Mullany and Capt. Peter Ogilvie, Jun have familys and are not in the most pleasant condition to leave

I shall receive it as a great favor if you will permit them to return on parole

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B, p 136)

The draft of a second letter from Sheaffe to Smyth has been preserved, which may relate to this proposal.

17th Oct. [1812]

I have the honor of forwarding a note addressed to you which B G.W [adsworth] has delivered to me. I avail myself of the opportunity to request that I may be informed at what time I may expect the prisoners in your power at Lewiston and Buffalo to be sent over and if anything yet remains to be done on my part to accelerate the execution of the agreement for their exchange

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 A p. 192)

Smyth's reply to these letters was framed in a decidedly aggressive spirit

FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL SMYTH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE

Head Quarters of the Army of the Centre,
Camp near Lewiston 18 Oct 1812

Sir

Your letter dated yesterday I have this moment had the honor to receive.

In the agreement respecting the exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder & Major Evans there is nothing said of the Indian Chief But any verbal agreement entered into by Colonel Winder will be fulfilled.

Colo. Winder addressed a note to Genl V Rensselaer stating that you estimated the Indian chief as equal to a [illegible] major and requesting instructions

I propose to exchange the Indian chief for the 24 men, 7 women 6 children taken at Chicago or such of them as were not butchered.

The prisoners at Buffalo have not been intentionally detained The transfer of command has prevented the order being given for their release It shall be immediately given

The conduct of Mr Hamilton particularly in attempting to cross to Canada by night and alone would perhaps justify us in treating him as a spy But willing to proceed in a liberal manner I accept your proposition for his Exchange The delicacy of his situation and the importance of his connexion will justify me in estimating him equal to a captain of regular troops.

For the master commandant of the Detroit Brig Adams I expect a captain of regulars in exchange I think he ranks so by your regulations. For Mr Carr Lt of Marines & Mr Molloy you will please to release Lieutenants Totten & Randolph

I am very sorry that at the moment I am writing this despatch a british prisoner is found exploring the camp having left his quarters about a mile distant I have placed him in close confinement.

As I am averse to taking a single life or occasioning a single calamity without an object I propose a further continuance of the Armistice indefinitely each party having a right to terminate it, giving thirty hours notice to the other party the armistice to extend along the frontier from the Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B pp 141 143)

A draft of Sheaffe's reply contains several interlineations and erasures, but was studiously conciliatory

Fort George, 18th October 1812.

Sir

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your communication by Captain King Assistant Inspector General.

That there was nothing said of the Indian Chief in the agreement for an exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder and Major Evans was owing to a supposition on the part of the latter that the case was already provided for by a special agreement between Colonel Winder and myself that

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Ensign Thomas Kerr, Royal Newfoundland Regiment, mortally wounded at Frenchtown, River Raisin, 22 January 1813 an Indian was taken prisoner having been mentioned in conversation before these two officers began the discussion of the subject on which they were to treat (and I was so strongly impressed with the idea that the exchange was finally settled that I gave an assurance to his friends that he was to be restored)* With regard to your proposition to exchange the Indian Chief for the men, women, and children, or such of them as (were not butchered)** may survive, I infinitely regret, Sir, that it is not in my power to restore them all without conditions. In (the transactions to which you allude)** operations against that place neither the British Govt nor the influence of its officers, nor a British force was concerned, or probably your present proposition would be needless I must therefore disclaim (any)* stipulations regarding them but whatever may be in my power towards obtaining the restoration of the survivors to their friends I shall most joyfully do, unconnected with the present subject of discussion

(I cannot admit it as a principle though Mr Hamilton's conduct during his detention may not have been in some respects justifiable yet I conceive that having been provided with a passport his attempt)** There are (particular)* circumstances perhaps in Mr Hamilton's case that (make me desirous of avoiding discussion)** I am not qualified to discuss and as I am anxious for his returning into the bosom of a family that has suff(ere)d so much on his account I am willing to grant more than perhaps ought to be deemed an equivalent for him.

The late commander of the Detroit belonging to the provincial marine ranks with us only as a Lieut of the regular troops. Mr Molloy's rank is inferior to that of a Lieut but Sir I am desirous that the opening of a correspondence between us should be marked by a spirit of liberality conformably with which I propose that for

Mr Hamilton,
Comm'r Rolette,
Lt Ket

Mr Molloy and the Indian chief should be returned to you two captains of regular troops the two Lieuts you have named and Lt Smith who took the Indian chief and the Mr Smith already offered with him or a major of militia as originally proposed or if you have any substitute to name I beg that you will make it known to me

As my sentiments perfectly accord with those you express in the opening of your proposal for continuing the

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(*) Omitted (**) Inserted

armistice I assent to its being prolonged indefinitely, each party having a right to terminate it, giving 30 hours previous notice.

I am extremely sorry to hear that a british prisoner has been so indiscreet as to render himself liable to punishment. I hope that he has erred from ignorance and that an enquiry into the case will satisfy you that it was so.

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B pp. 137-140)

This letter had an immediate mollifying effect and Smyth replied next day.

Head Quarters Camp near Lewiston Oct. 19th, 1812.

Sir

I have received your letter of yesterday and close with all your propositions.

You will be pleased to give liberty to Capt. Gibson, Capt. Machesney, Lieutenant Totten, Lieutenant Randolph, Lieut. Smith and Mr. Smith.

The prisoners at this place you will receive to-day & orders have gone by express for the release of those at Buffalo.

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B p. 144)

General Sheaffe amended his official account of the battle at Queenston[1] by a short memorandum addressed to the military secretary of Sir George Prevost.

Fort George 18th Octr. 1812

Memorandum

In my despatch of the 13th inst. I omitted mentioning my A.D.C. Ensign Coffin. I discovered the omission in reading it and I fear that I did not rectify the error. It should have been thus "I found the services of Lieut. Fowler 41st Regt. &c. &c. &c. and of my A.D.C. Ensign Coffin[2] very useful." I beg that the correction may be admitted into the despatch.

(Dominion Archives C. 677 p. 140)

On the day after the battle of Queenston Heights Charles Askin described the action as well as he could from the information he had then received in a letter to his father

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[1] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II, pp. 71 and 77 and Wood, Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, I, pp. 601-608.

[2] Afterwards Colonel Nathaniel Coffin, Adjutant-General of Militia for Upper Canada, 1813-1837. Sheaffe's brother-in-law.

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara Wednesday Octr 14th, 1812.

Dear Father

Yesterday I am happy to say a great victory was gained by us over the Americans at Queenston but it is a dear bought victory for our ever to be lamented General was killed. The action commenced about one hour before day light and continued till three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Early in the day the General received a wound and I believe never spoke a word after. When the Americans first came over there were only two companies of the 49th Regt and two or three companies of militia to oppose them. In one of the companies of the 49th Wm. Robertson went with Mr Robt Grant as volunteers and distinguished himself very much. The Americans opened a battery on us and we threw over shells and cannonaded them as much as we could but not to much effect for they continued coming over. The militia and 49th being engaged so much were soon much reduced by their killed and wounded. When information was given to the General that the Americans were getting on the mountain he immediately ordered Col. McDonnell to collect what men he could find [and] oppose them for at this time the 49th and militia were in different parties. About 40 men were collected. They ran up the mountain and found about two or three hundred of the American regulars there well formed. Wm R[obertson] who was at the head of the 40 men ran forward and hollowed out to the Americans, "Now we will be at you." But the Americans immediately fired at them and obliged our men to retire down the hill. We had a battery half way up the mountain which was but weakly guarded. The General was there and was obliged to leave it and the Americans took possession of it. It was soon after this that the General got the wound which killed him. The Americans had possession of part of Queenston for some time and kept it as well as the battery and were busy bringing over their men as fast as they could, till reinforcements from this place and Chippawa of the 41st, militia and Indians, formed as I understand on the mountain and attacked them so vigorously that they ran down the mountain as fast as they could and made for the river to get over and some attempted to swim. When the American General on the other side seeing what a perilous situation they were in sent over a flag of truce and they all surrendered prisoners of war. They were all marched down to this place and got here about sundown. They came over to breakfast on this side but I believe it was a day of fasting with them. There are about six hundred men taken and nearly fifty officers. One company of riflemen had made their way into the woods & remained there all night. We heard this morning that the Indians were after them and a party of the 41st & militia are sent this morn[in]g to protect them what I must say they hardly deserve. Had they not surrendered yesterday they would have all been driven into the river for they fled before our men the grenadiers of the 41st, who were anxious to retrieve their character, were very anxious to charge them but they ran before them so fast that they never could get up to them and went down what you might almost call precipices to get out of the way of our men. What number of our men were lost I cannot say but there are few considering the time they were engaged. I think we have lost about sixty men and only one officer which was poor General Brock. Col McDonnell is dangerously wounded and several officers of the 49th are wounded but not badly. The Americans I think must have lost more than a hundred and I am told several of their officers were killed at least six or seven. Among those taken is General Wadsworth, Cols Allen, Van Ranselaer, & Scott and some other Col.

When the Americans were first coming over about 80 who were in a scow were so galled by the fire from a few of the 49th Regt. that they begged for quarter and were taken prisoners. I saw a great many of the prisoners, one half of whom are militia, these were anxious to know and were in hopes of being allowed to go home as the militia taken at Detroit [were] but when they were told they would have to go to Quebec they were not very well pleased. Had they had an idea of it there are not many of them would have put their foot on this shore. I regret much that I could not share in the honor of the victory. After my arrival at Queenston I was confined to bed with boils and was two days that I could not get up to my meals nor could I hardly sit up in bed for the worst of the boils and the one broke the day before they came over. I was laying at George Hamilton's when we were first attacked and went from that to Robert's as well as I could. there I remained about an hour but finding the Americans were gaining ground I thought that as I would not run that I should get out of their way as I could & went to a village about 2½ miles back and from that I came down here to get arms for some men that were there.

I have not time to write more & paper is so scarce that I can hardly get a sheet. This I had to beg.

The two flank companies of the Newfoundland Fencibles are on their way to Amherstburg. I think there are nearly two hundred of them.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers. 1812

49th. Davids.

On the day of General Brock's funeral Charles Askin wrote a short letter to his father.

Niagara 16th Octr 1812
Friday 3 o'Clock P.M.

Dear Father

I wrote you two days ago giving you an account of an action which was fought at Queenston on Tuesday last, in which engagement we were Victorious, but when I wrote you I did not know the great advantage we had gained over the Enemy, we have took on that day nearly eight hundred prisoners sixty five of whom are officers and we killed and drowned I think about two hundred more, we took one of their standards also and a six pounder, it would have been a great Victory had we not lost our Gallant General Brock who was killed when animating the 49th Regt and desiring them to charge the Enemy who had just then taken our Battery on the Mountain soon after the General was killed his Aid de Camp Col McDonnell received a wound of which he died two days after he was a very promising young man—both him and the poor General were just now interred, the procession was grand. The Indians formed a part of it—

We have had a Cessation of Hostilities for three days by Agreement, it terminates in about an hour—but I hardly think we will be attacked for some days though they have a very large force on the other side. I am told that many of those who came over were drove into the boats at the Point of the Bayonet. I think that their comrades will be more unwilling to come over now.

My love to my Dear Mother Brothers & Sisters if you please

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813, printed at Halifax in 1815 by John Howe, Junior[a] has become a very rare book. Its dedication to "the People of Canada" is subscribed "An Acadian." It contains the following versified account of the battle at Queenston

"But soon the veteran band these wilds forsake
And speed their way down bright Erie's lake
For there another army brav'd the shore,
That in conjunction, might have turn'd before
But these rare Generals every one are free
Go where they like not where they ought to be

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[a] Probably a brother of Hon. Joseph Howe.

Over Niagara's flood this chose to go
Where he expected but a slender foe
Two moons had fill'd their horns while slow he paused.
Canada's infant shot some terror caused,
They were deceived, thinking her baby frame
Would fall with fear—even at a Yankee's name
But finding more mature, her nerves and strength
Cautious he strove—then on advanced at length
To where the narrows there are the opposing shore
And they could see that nothing stood before
Brock was not there—they were in perfect plight
To land and take the little town that night
Their chief Van Rensselaer—a rugged name
In story large, and lengthy on his fame
Why fam'd, I hear you say? ay! why indeed
Except for merit to obtain the meed.
Long ere so beautiful a wreath was due
Or else, as wreaths are scarce, to steal a few
Be as it may—he crossed at dead of night
When the young moon show'd all her borrow'd light
Before they left the shore, a deep blood red
Glow'd o'er her face with streaks of darkness spread
Thus pensively she cast a feeble light
O'er a long field with falchions gleaming bright
There the invaders stood and heard around
On every side the cataract's mighty sound
They paused and listen'd, not from any fear
'Twas but the cataract—not drums they hear
And on the General led his phalanx strong
Like midnight murder mov'd he slow along

But as they gain'd the border of the flood,
Somewhat refractory his army stood,
All would not cross, entreaties, threats were vain,
Down on the rocks they sit—and there remain
To learn what fortune those advancing found,
And glad if victory their efforts crown'd.
Another trick eked out their delay
Fifteen longboats, with oars, had gone astray
But this they remedy, then ply the oar
And reach Canada's silent sleeping shore.

The watchful sentinel the town alarms
Quick the responsive drummer beat to arms.
Canada's General—like a ray of light
A splendid meteor on the brow of night
Advanced along, ere day began to dawn
Or from his lair had sprung the sleeping fawn

Surpris'd the foe beheld him lead his band,
And on the margin of the river stand
No power was left to fly—for on the shore
One half were landing—and the rest were o'er
Near where the whirlpool agitates the flood,
Frowning with scorn the British heroes stood,
And on the foes advance their volleys pour
Tinging with blood the till then hallow'd shore
Yet on the invaders came tho' Brock withstood
Their force with bayonets deep dy'd in blood
The treble number'd foe push'd on with zeal,
And made Brock's bright and glittering rampart reel
And now terrific—what carnage mark'd the strand
And drench'd with blood Canadia's hallow'd land
Captive a patriot breast with ardor fir'd
His firm strong heart with energy inspir'd
A Briton panting for his country's fame
Anxious to strengthen her renowned name
Yet here in bondage held, in galling chains
A mere spectator of the scene remains
Where hated enemies with pride rejoice
And rage must smother the resentful voice

How in the conflict did his heart rebound,
How tremble at the shouts that rang around,
'Till victory to her son the laurel bore
To Brock the hero of Niagara's shore
Who made the fury of the battle's bray
Out roar the cataract's resistless sway
A pause ensued the voice of war was still
The victors' trump was silent on the hill,
When slow and solemn came the heavy sound
That Brock was struggling with a mortal wound
The field he kept—not till his foes had fled,
Then smiling death's cold mantle round him spread
The ground that just before wept blood for tears
Now wet with sorrow's drops forlorn appears
The Indians laid their warlike belts aside
Their strings of wampum—and their martial pride
Near the pale corse their varied trophies lay
To tell their strength and pride had pass'd away
Silent they stood and gaz'd upon the bier
But heav'd no sigh, nor dropp'd one friendly tear
Renowned Chief—joy rest with thy remains,
Virtue's bright current fill'd thy manly veins

Where could more glory dignify his name,
Engrave him deeper on the list of fame

[illegible]
[illegible]
In hon[illegible] his [illegible]
And her escutcheon glitters [illegible]

Say, gallant shade, on thy last [illegible]
In sacred drops, and yon rough [illegible]
Say, could thy pillow be more grand and dread
Or more sublime thy winding sheet be spread?
Than there, where nature all her power combines
To grace a canopy, where fame reclines
Niagara's shore, whose far resounding flood,
Tinges its foam with thy respected blood
Whose hurried waters and waves sublime
Laughs at the figure of [illegible]
Where Iris weeps—and spreads her polished bow
Bedew'd with tears that to thy memory flow

Brock's mausoleum, distant worlds shall tell
And paint Niagara, where the hero fell
Time spurning flood—when [illegible] more
Thou wilt recite the tragic story o'er
And show that grave, beside his on the hill
Where brave Macdonald holds his station still
[illegible]—in fortune's [illegible] they sped
So side, by side, are laid the heroes dead."

"October 1812." Pp. 23-27

A memorial from Major James Dennis, prepared by him at the end of the war, contains considerable information respecting the battle of Queenston and other operations in which he was engaged not to be found elsewhere.

His Honour Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, President Administering the Government of Upper Canada, &c. &c. &c.

The Memorial of Brevet Major James Dennis 49th Regiment Major of Brigade to the Forces Quebec

20th March 1815

SHEWETH

That your Memorialist conceiving that a statement of his services in the Canadas & more particularly in Upper Canada might be deemed deserving Your Honors consideration, as well as that of the Honourable the Council of that Province

Humbly intreats your benevolent interest in his prayer and your recommendation that he may Obtain a grant of Land as a gratuity for the same—

Your Memorialist humbly states that he has served nearly Thirteen Years in both Canadas between four and five years of which period he served in the upper Province and nearly Two years and Six Months of the latter period, in a scene of Active and harassing Warfare and at a crisis of the late War very important to the interests of that Country particularly when its very salvation was menaced by the attempts of the Enemy (which under the Direction of Divine Providence were defeated) on the 13th October, 1812.

That your Memorialist had the honor to Command the Post of Queenston for some weeks before at the actual period when and for some time after it was attacked by General Van Rancelar and the Americans, numerically triple in force, by the firmness Zeal and intrepidity of a few Royal and Militia Artillery, the Flankers of the 49th Regiment, aided by the Gallantry and Devotion of Captains Hatts, Chisholms & Durands Companies of Militia, who rivalled the regulars in good conduct had the good fortune to maintain his position in spite of every effort essayed by an overwhelming force of the Enemy and previous to the arrival of the ever to be regretted Major General Sir Isaac Brock who (on the ground) was pleased to applaud Memorialists arrangement for the Defence and the conduct of the Troops in repelling the attack and Maintaining the Post of Queenston to a few moments before his lamented fate. Major General Sir Isaack Brock was unaccompanied on his first arrival having dispatched his Aide de Camps to Hurry on the reinforcements which could be spared from Fort George and who afterwards (combined with those remaining of Mem'lists Command) for Mem'list again succeeded to it after our beloved general fell) and also by the intrepid conduct of the increased Number of Militia with the Indians Achieved in the after part of the day a glorious Victory the firm foundation for which was laid by the panic struck in the Enemy by nearly four hours constant and severe fighting against their superior Numbers from a quarter before four oClock on that memorable morning when the Troops under your Memorialists command destroyed between 300 and 400 of the Enemy took and sunk five large Batteaux and a large scow (called the Wasp of Oswego) and also took 97 Prisoners all before an Individual served to their Assistance and Memorialist presumes to be thus minute in detailing the Services of the Troops under his Command on that day that he may do them the Justice they deserve and that recapitulating their Efforts under your

Memorialists direction may be considered as an Humble plea for attention to the Object of his prayer.*

Memorialist had also the honor of being in the Actions of Newark on the 27th of May and in that of Stoney Creek the 6th June following (1813) in each of which he had a horse shot under him, and Memorialist further had the honor of serving in several skirmishes with the Enemy while holding a command at the Cross roads on the position circumscribing the enemy when in possession of Fort George, particularly one Sunday when field officer on duty he rallied the troops and indians retiring from the position of the advanced picquet which a superior force of the American Indians and rifle men had obtained the possession of and with charged bayonets routed the enemy and reoccupied an Advanced position. Memorialist had also the good fortune to repell a Second attack in the Ev'g of the same day which the enemy made on our Picquets (with about 600 Indians & rifle men) for the purpose of inforcing a reconnaissance of our position at the Cross roads. Memorialist had the honor to receive Major General Stewart's (then Col Stewart of the 1st Royals) thanks in the presence of Major General De Rottenburgh, Major General Vincent and Lt Colonel Harvey, Dy Adjutant General for the performance of his duty on that Sunday, (Col. Stewart then Comg the Post). Your Memorialist during his services in the Country has commanded at the following Posts, at St Johns & Dependencies (lower Canada) York for a short period during the absence of Lt Col Sheaffe Fort Erie 15 months (during peace) Fort George Queenston Chippawa, St Davids 20 Mile Creek the latter Command the advance of the Centre Division by order of Major General Vincent at the recommendation of Lt Col. Harvey Dy Adjt. General.

Memorialist also commanded a corps of observation at Cornwall the Stores at which Post with 12 Batteaux laden with provisions & Stores for Kingston he was fortunate in withdrawing from the plunder of the force under the Command of the American Genl. Wilkinson when he descended the St Lawrence in Nov 1813. Memorialist with an Unorganized, ill found though high spirited and gallant Militia, about 300 in Number took up a position (having destroyed the Bridge) near Hooples Creek in advance of Cornwall, and engaged & for an hour and a half kept in check

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* A sketch of the battle of Queenston, made by Major Dennis was reproduced in Volume VI of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society p. 76 redrawn, it is stated, from a vignette on a small map of Upper Canada published by O. G. Steele, No. [illegible] Main Street, Buffalo N.Y., in 1839.

(the day before the Battle of Chryslers the advance Column General Wilkinsons Force thereby as he has since been informed by American Officers & which a reference to Genl. Wilkinsons dispatch will Confirm) preventing General Wilkinson from sending assistance from his centre Column where he was himself—to reinforce the troops engaged next day with our Army at Chryslers as he was uncertain at which Point assistance Might be More Necessary—Memorialist although having but one Sergt and Private of his Own Regt and whom he was obliged to give up to the security of the Ammunition continued to Shew a fire from the different parts of the bush along the creek and created temporary respect from the enemy by a fallacious display of force that produced slowness in his advance altho Amounting (at that Creek) to 1500 Inf'y & 200 dragoons with 3 Field Pieces which placing in position they attempted to dislodge us whenever fire was given and which after discovering the finesse they in course, succeeded in, it becoming an unwarrantable temerity to continue a contest on such unequal terms and which could only terminate with capture and slaughter of the peasantry of the Country, without Effecting any profitable end; a Night march of this same body of [illegible] in a few days after (Combined with the approach of our troops after the Victory won at Chryslers) induced the precipitate departure of the whole American Force from Our territory

Memorialist trusts the faithful display of his services will not induce the reflection that he is wanting in that modesty so commendable in the Military character that it is a base effort to strengthen the picture for the sole faultless purpose of gaining attention towards his prayer and memorialist trusts it will not diminish his claim to express that the gentlemen and peasantry on the Niagara Frontier as well as those of Glengary & Dundas will bear sufficient testimony to the veracity of the particular services herein stated

Memorialist humbly adds that during his services in Upper Canada he was twice wounded once at Queenston and again at Stoney Creek and never was an hour absent from his duties whilst serving for nearly 13 years in the Canadas

This statement taken into your honours gracious consideration and obtaining your recommendation for the grant of land solicited being bestowed will impress with strong feelings of gratitude Your Memorialist & devoted Obedient
& faithful
Humble Servant
J Dennis[*] B Major 49th Regt.
Brigade Major to the Forces.

(Sundries Upper Canada 1815)

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[*] Afterwards Major-General Sir James Dennis, K.C.B.

Expectations of an immediate renewal of hostilities caused an urgent call for reinforcements to the militia on active duty. This was embodied in a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Clark to Charles Askin.

Sir

Chippawa, Octr 23d, 1812.

The company of militia at Canborough & lower Haldimand of which you are captain being attached to the 2nd Lincoln Regiment under my command I have now to order that you immediately march down here every man under your command as quick as possible. On their arrival here they will receive arms and ammunition.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

A letter from General Sheaffe to the Military Secretary shows that the exchange of officers was productive of some information of considerable importance.

Sir

Fort George 25th Octr 1812.

I transmit herewith some intelligence recently obtained. That from Lieutenant Rolette is interesting as it relates to the designs of the enemy on our vessels on the lakes and the means for executing them. L. Colonel Myers sends to Colonel MacDonell Lieutenant Rolette's report of the capture of the Detroit and other information relative to the Marine Department.

(Dominion Archives C. 677 p. 143)

As soon as the death of General Brock became known at York the resident members of the Executive Council were hastily assembled and the clerk was instructed to inform General Sheaffe that in succeeding him in the military command he had also become administrator of the civil affairs of the province. This was done in a letter from Mr John Small in the following terms:

"As soon as intelligence was received of the death of the late President General Brock the Executive Council assembled on the summons of the Chief Justice and I am directed to transmit to you Sir as succeeding to the command of His Majesty's Forces in this Province the enclosed copy of the additional royal instructions of 13th July 1811 and to apprise you that the civil government must remain unprovided until you are sworn a member of the Executive Council."

(Dominion Archives, C. 686 B, p. 129)

The opportune extension of the armistice enabled Sheaffe to comply with very little delay. He announced this fact in a letter to Sir George Prevost, dated at Fort George on October 19:

"After writing my despatch of yesterday I received a proposition from Brigadier Gen'l Smyth, commanding on the United States frontier, for prolonging the armistice indefinitely, either party having a right to terminate it, giving thirty hours notice to the other party, to which I have acceded, as it corresponds with the system adopted on our part, and removes the obstacle of my going over to York—the wind has not permitted the departure of the second (and last) division of the Prisoners—but it seems now inclined to be favorable for it, and they are embarking in the Moira and Simcoe to proceed for Kingston. Lt Colonel Myers reports on the subject to Colonel McDonell.[1]

"I am informed that Captain Loring[2] of the 104th Regiment (late Lt of the 49th) has arrived at Montreal. I shall feel much obliged to Your Excellency to permit his joining me, as he came out with the expectation of being appointed my Aide de Camp. If my request cannot be granted, I beg leave to recommend him to Your Excellency as well qualified for the staff appointment suitable to his rank should there be a vacancy.

"I this moment learn that the Prince Regent is coming in—I shall embark in her without delay and proceed to York, and as I intend sending this despatch from thence by land I shall close it there."

—(Sheaffe's Letter Book)

Sheaffe wrote again to Prevost next day from York:

"I arrived here last night and found the Moira and Simcoe here, the wind having forced them to put in.

"The Executive Council assembled to-day and I was sworn in as a Member of it and afterwards as President, which I have communicated to Earl Bathurst in a despatch that accompanies.[3]

"The Vessel that was supposed to be the P[rince] R[egent] proved to be the Royal George in which I came over. That ship has taken on board the Prisoners that had been sent to this place and with the Moira and Simcoe has just sailed for Kingston. The P[rince] R[egent] arrived here this evening and I shall return to Fort George in that vessel to-morrow."

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[1] Colonel Edward Macdonell, Quartermaster-General.

[2] Captain Robert Roberts Loring, who afterwards became A.D.C. to Sir Gordon Drummond and was taken prisoner at Lundy's Lane.

[3] Printed in "The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812," Part II, pp. 146-148.

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

Early in November, 1812, by the advice of the Executive Council, a board of magistrates was appointed by the President to examine persons claiming exemption from military service as citizens of the United States and consequently liable to deportation as alien enemies, consisting of the Honourable William Claus, Thomas Dickson, and Joseph Edwards, to whom the following instructions were issued:

"Instructions from His Honor to the Board appointed at Niagara, for the examination of persons residing in the Niagara, London and Western Districts who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States.

"Having thought proper in conformity with the advice of the Executive Council to constitute you or any two of you to be a Board at Niagara to receive and decide upon the pretensions of persons in the Niagara, London, and Western Districts, who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States; you will therefore receive all such applications and being satisfied that the persons applying are subjects of the United States, you will furnish them with passports to cross the line at such place and in such manner as you may find expedient to direct. Should however instances occur in which it may appear to you that very serious inconvenience may arise to [illegible] persons being settled and having families in the country who have not received lands from the Crown or taken the oath of allegiance, you may report the same to me especially with your opinion as to the terms of a modified allegiance as security for good conduct on which they may be permitted to remain.

"Roger Hale Sheaffe, President."

A form of passport was appended:

The bearer of this (person's name at full length) late resident in (name of District, &c.) having reported himself to us as a subject of the United States and we being satisfied that he is so, do hereby grant him this passport that he may be passed over to from and quit this Province on or before the day of

"Given under our hands at this day of

"N.B. A description of the person to whom the passport is given to be inserted at the foot or on the back thereof. The transport to be returned to the Board after it has been employed for the purpose for which it was granted."

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B, pp. 155-6)

A letter from Alexander Hamilton, afterwards Sheriff of the Niagara district for many years, to Charles Askin, contains a sarcastic reference to the short-lived newspaper published at Niagara after the demise of the "Guardian."

Dear Charles,

10 Nov., 1812.

Your note by Matthew Crooks came to hand yesterday morning but owing to my con[founde]d memory I did not send it with him. I now enclose you a Bee of the 31st Oct, which is the last we have, that of last week partaking too deeply of the cup, got drunk and died. I also send you a ten dollar association note.[3] Should you want more I can supply you very well being at present pretty flush. The Moira, Simcoe and Murney's sloop came in the other day loaded with cloathes for the militia[4] and goods for individuals. There is nothing new by them. It is said they were to be sent back immediately to Kingston for 2 more companies of the 49th and 1 of the Newfoundland company which would be a great addition to our strength. They are so dilatory that the country might be taken & retaken two or three times before they would get back again.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

The armistice was terminated by a letter from General Smyth at Buffalo, stating that it would end at nine o'clock on the evening of November 20. This notice was given to the commandant at Fort Erie in the forenoon of November 19, instead of being sent to General Sheaffe at Fort George, yet it was delivered to him at half past eight that evening. Next day Alexander Hamilton wrote to Charles Askin at Chippawa.

My dear Charles,

Nia[gara] 20 Nov 1812.

Yours of this morning by Mr Nellet has this moment come to hand. Respecting the notice given us of the termination of the armistice it is certainly the case tho I wonder you don't know it as it came from Fort Erie. Col. Clark does not seem to know it either which seems rather strange. We understand we are to open every battery upon them at this place the moment the truce is over. The whole country is in requisition at present drawing charcoal for to heat the shot. The plan is said to be to open every gun, shells, mortars, carcasses, &c., &c., and continue the business until we get their fort in a blaze which if it should succeed which will be the means of throwing all their works which are fire proof open to our view. Hamilton Merritt leaves this for Detroit with despatches and money for that place. I have just called at Dr Kerr's for your salts but he has none and does not think there are any in town. Herman's and Baldwin's are the only shops now open. I enclose you two ten dollar notes. As I do not just now want them they may be as well with you as me. I am happy to hear that the boards &c are mostly down and would be still happier to hear they were well sold. Everybody here are now busy sending off their furniture &c as it is generally believed we shall have it very hot and probably all a flame. I will endeavor to find some salts for you and salve before Mr Nelles returns. Adieu perhaps forever in this world.

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[3] Probably issued by the Niagara and Queenston Association of Merchants formed to support the credit of the provincial government.

[4] Purchased at Montreal by Lieut.-Colonel Nichol, Quartermaster General of Militia. Cf. Sheaffe to Prevost, 8 Nov., 1812, in Documentary History, Vol IV, p. 188.

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

Later in the day Charles Askin wrote in much the same mood.

Chippawa, Nov 20th 1812

Dear Father

We have notice from the other side that the armistice terminates at 9 o'clock to-night. We doubted it at first but now there is no doubt of it and we expect an attack before to-morrow morning. I have given Elizabeth Meredith's miniature and some other things (that came from Archange) to Mrs Macklem of this place to take care of. They are sealed and addressed to you. There is also some papers addressed in the same manner. I send up in a waggon a keg of snuff for my dear mother which she will give part of to my poor uncle & aunt Barthe. I shall also send up a few yds of bombazet for my aunt and a keg of butter for my mother which I hope will get to Fort Erie in time to go up in the Lady Prevost. As we are all preparing to meet the enemy I have not time to say more. Please to give my kind love to my dear mother, to James, to Alexr, my sisters and all my relations & friends.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

With this letter went another longer one begun two days earlier and completed the same day

Chippawa, 18th Nov., 1812

Dear Father—

Three days ago I wrote to you but did not find an opportunity, until to-day that I saw Capt Hall of sending the letter the Lady Prevost now laying at Fort Erie will sail from that with the first fair wind I will endeavor to send up [illegible] lbs. Tea, which a man has gone to Queenston for to-day that it may be up in time for the Vessel the snuff and Keg of butter if in my power shall go at the same time—but as I have been disappointed in get[t]ing the butter which I long since spoke for, I may perhaps not be able to send up the Keg, for being stationed here with my company of Militia I cannot leave this to go where I could get it. I am also prevented from sending something to my Uncle Bethune for I cannot get such things as I would wish to send him here, for being in daily expectation of an attack, the Merchants have packed up most of their goods.

On Friday last an attempt was made by the Americans to take the Royal George then laying at the Ducks near Kingston alone, the Oneida, a Vessel of equal force and four others were employed for this purpose, but fortunately for us they failed in the attempt we lost one man killed and three wounded the Royal George cut her Cable and made for Kingston. The Simcoe was there on her way down and was chased, but luckily got safe into Kingston The Earl Moira was also on her way down but not in company with the Simcoe nothing has been heard of her but as she left York the day after the Simcoe she had not time to have got to Kingston when the express left The American Vessels are better manned I believe than ours on Lake Ontario, and I am afraid unless some British Tars are sent for the enemy will make themselves masters of it I was told that Capt Hall had made application to go for seamen to Quebec but was refused. One of the inhabitants of this District who has been over since the war on the other side made his escape a few days ago and came over near Queenston in a Boat he says the Militia have left the lines but that the enemy have about seven thousand regulars between Niagara & Buffalo. I do not think they have so many and if they have we have six thousand to oppose them and their regulars are not near so well disciplined as our flankers Clothing has lately come for the Militia, the Flank Companies get 1 pr pantaloons each 1 pr shoes or two pr. Shoe packs & 1 Jacket. Shirts and stockings are provided for them. For 3 yds. of flannel and thread to make it they have to pay 3/6 N.Y.C. and the stockings which are very good, cost them 4/4 apc Yk. every militiaman is to have a blanket but they are to be returned.

James Hamilton who is stationed with Robert about one mile from this, sent down to Queenston to-day for Elizabeth Meredith's miniature picture which he brought out with him and left in his trunk there. I shall try and send it up to you by Ensign Kerr who appears to be a very careful young man, and who has promised to take charge of it.

I have lately seen General Hull's official Dispatch to his Government respecting the surrender of Detroit, it is well wrote and more correct than I should have expected it; although I dare say Mr Brush will swear there is not a word of truth in it when he sees it. I see in the same paper that Col. Miller, who was taken at Detroit, is exchanged for Capt. Dacres of the Guerriere. I am very sorry I have not been able to get the paper to send it to you. I have wrote to Alex. Hamilton to send me from Niagara any papers he can get and expect some from him to-morrow which you shall have if they come. I will beg some from Mr Clark for you also. I gave you all the news in the letter I wrote you three days ago as I mean this shall go by land and may perhaps come to hand first. I shall just mention the most interesting things. Lord Wellington in several engagements with the French had always been victorious and had destroyed the whole of Marmont's Army. Marmont himself had lost his Arm and afterwards died. the French lost immense numbers. Lord Wellington in one of the battles had got a slight wound with a Sabre. He entered Madrid I think some time in August. Joseph Bonaparte had made his escape but had not got out of Spain we have had reports of his being since taken with the last of his followers about 7000 men but this I hardly believe, yet know that as we were masters of the North of Spain he stands a poor chance of getting clear. The French have been beat also in some encounters with the Russians and have lost three or four thousand men. this is all I now recollect except that it's said that Sir John Borlase Warren is sent out as Ambassador and is now at Washington we shall soon know if he is or not.

Nov 20. Yesterday we had information here that the Armistice would terminate at 9 o'clock to-night but we are not certain of it. I send now to Fort Erie 7½ half yds Bombazet done up in a small bundle covered with Sheeting and addressed to you this I will thank you to give to my Aunt Barthe with my love.

Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters & respects to my Uncle Barth.

(Burton Historical Collection Askin Papers)

When the privations and sufferings of the militia stationed on the Niagara became known at York the sympathy of the inhabitants was aroused and a meeting was called which resulted in the formation of the "Loyal and Patriotic Society," soon after for their aid and relief. The Reverend John Strachan, who took a leading part in its organization, wrote immediately on the subject to his former pupil John Beverley Robinson, who was still on duty with his flank company of the Third York regiment.

Nov. 22, 1812

My dear John,

In consequence of a hint in the letters of Mr. G. Ridout and Mr. Robert Stanton to their respective fathers, the gentlemen of York met to-day in the church for the purpose of subscribing towards the comforts of the militia belonging to this district on actual service, especially the flank companies.

Our subscription though not yet paid amounts to £150 and we wish your and Captain Heward's advice how to dispose of it for the most advantage of the men. Your brother Captain [Peter] Robinson thinks that the captains of the York militia should make a requisition upon the Quartermaster General for flannel sufficient to make two shirts for every man that wants them and thread &c. to make them up, together with a pair of stockings for each and we will supply the captains with the amount. If there is any difficulty in making them up we can get it done here instantly. The militia will be much pleased when they know with what alacrity the subscription proceeded.

To Lieut. John B. Robinson, Brown's Point by Niagara.

The appearance of a dominating hostile squadron of ships on Lake Ontario in November caused serious alarm. An emergency meeting of the Executive Council was held to discuss the situation. It was clearly seen that the safety of the seat of government as well as the Niagara Peninsula and the western part of the Province was dependent upon the maintenance of naval superiority on that lake. An address to General Sheaffe on the subject was adopted unanimously and signed by the Chief Justice as chairman.

"We trust that Your Honour will believe that the following observations proceed from the purest motives which we as a Committee of the Executive Council do now submit to your consideration.

"We rejoice with our fellow subjects at the success which has hitherto attended His Majesty's arms, but while reflecting with pleasure on the past we cannot conceal our anxiety for the future.

"By land our success has exceeded our hopes, not so in our warfare on the lakes. Whether this is to be attributed to inferiority of strength on our part, to accident which the wisest and bravest can neither foresee nor prevent, or to the inexperience of our naval commanders, we presume not even to hint at an opinion.

"But altho' our hopes have in some instances been disappointed nothing has as yet taken place to lead us to despair, much to excite our active exertions. If faith is to be given to report and that not slightly founded our enemies are using every effort to strengthen their marine on the lakes. At this moment it is said they are building a vessel superior in force to any that has yet appeared on Lake Ontario. The consequences that will necessarily follow from the command of the lakes being in the power of the United States would be distressing in the extreme to this province.

"We speak from the strongest conviction, we believe it would be fatal.

"But it is the farthest from our thoughts officiously to interfere with such measures as may be deemed expedient by those entrusted with command. We only as subjects and as men who have everything that is valuable and dear to them at stake offer our feeble aid by stating with the greatest deference and respect to Your Honour as President of that Board to which we belong our unanimous and solemn opinion, that to strengthen our marine on the lakes is absolutely necessary under existing circumstances for the defence and preservation of this Province.

Novr. 17th, 1812. Thomas Scott, Chairman."

(Dominion Archives, C. 728 pp. 113-4)

This address was sent at once to General Sheaffe who replied a week later from his headquarters at Fort George where his attention was engaged by the recent resumption of active hostilities.

"Your address is before me. The subject of it is of vital importance to this Province. It has therefore an imperious claim to the attention of those who are guardians of the public welfare. As such in making this representation you have performed one of the most essential duties which your public character imposed on you.

"The state of our Provincial Marine and the necessity for its improvement and augmentation are known to his Excellency the Commander of the Forces and have been the subject of communication to His Majesty's Ministers to whom it has been recommended to employ officers and seamen of the Royal Navy on the lakes, and as it has become evident that immediate exertions are necessary without waiting for distant aid, I have no doubt that every effort will be made without delay to bring forward the resources which the British Provinces can furnish for counteracting the exertions and designs of the enemy, in aid of which I am endeavoring to collect information from every part of this Province of persons who can be procured to assist in building or navigating vessels and of the materials and stores that can be furnished for their construction and equipment.

"You truly observe Gentlemen, that nothing has yet taken place to lead us to despair. We have hitherto waged a successful war and with means that might have been justly deemed inadequate to the task which they accomplished. Providence has been on our side. Let us look with humble confidence to its continued aid. I transmit to His Excellency the Governor in Chief a copy of your address."[5]

(Dominion Archives Sundries Upper Canada 1812)

Sir George Prevost had already given the subject serious attention as Sheaffe knew, but his means were limited and he was dependent mainly on assistance from distant sources.

On the first day of January 1813, he replied from Quebec in as satisfying terms as he felt justified in employing to Sheaffe's appeal.

"I have received your letter of the 16th of last month containing a report of Captain Gray's arrival at Fort George and Lieutenant Colonel Myers being detained there by indisposition.[4] My despatches to you of the 23rd November and of the 15th and [illegible] December will have made you acquainted with the resources I have been enabled to draw from Lower Canada for aiding in the execution of the plan which is proposed for the improvement of the Marine establishment in Upper Canada to such an extent as shall at least raise it to an equality with the enemy. By a reference to them you will perceive that I was duly sensible that assistance of an essential kind was to be drawn only from a source over which I am without control, and in consequence early application was made from me to the Government and the Admiral in command of the ships on the American station. I have every reason to believe our wants will be attended to from both quarters, and with a promptitude calculated to add vigor to the exertions we are making for the preservation of the Province entrusted to your immediate defence. I agree with you in opinion that the construction of gunboats must become a secondary consideration. The general sketch of the plan proposed to be submitted to me by Lieutenant Colonel Myers respecting the increased establishment of the navy did not accompany the letter in which it is mentioned, but as you are armed with such full authority on that subject I trust nothing impedes its progress. The arrival of Mr. Plucknett[5] with one hundred and twenty ship carpenters and thirty seamen at Kingston, the departure under proper escorte of one hundred sledges laden with marine and ordnance stores from Montreal for Upper Canada, the assurance of receiving marine supplies from Halifax as early in the year as possible together with a proportion of naval officers and seamen, all these circumstances will convince the gentlemen of your Executive Council that I am duly impressed with the necessity of strengthening our naval force on the lakes and at the same time as they are made acquainted by you with the measures in operation for their support, you may assure your Council that I will fail in nothing that is within my ability for seconding their loyal and gallant disposition to defend and preserve entire the valuable province of Upper Canada.

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[5] See his letter to Sir George Prevost, 23rd Nov. 1812, in Documentary History 1812, Part II, pp. 229-230.

"Mr. Freer[6] will have made known to you the preparations which are making for the comfortable clothing of your militia. I regret that the total want of scarlet cloth has compelled me to consent to green being made use of for the purpose. When the militia are clothed and paid, the laws under which they were incorporated seem to me sufficient to enable you to establish for their government a system of discipline which may render that force very efficient against an American army.

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[4] Myers and Gray were the officers of the Quartermaster General's Department who were then employed to superintend the construction of ships of war on Lakes Erie and Ontario.

[5] Thomas J. Plucknett, appointed storekeeper and superintendent of the dockyard at Kingston.

[6] His military secretary.

"I shall be glad to hear the result of your enquiry respecting Captain King[1] but without some decisive proof shall be brought against him to establish his being a British subject you will of course release him agreeably to the convention entered into between General Dearborn and myself for an exchange of prisoners, a copy of which I have directed Mr. Freer to furnish to you.

"Since writing the above I have seen General Smyth's official account of the late attempt to invade Upper Canada[2] and Mr. Porter's comments upon it.[3] From my perusal of them my apprehensions for the safety of the province are considerably diminished. Such a force cannot be considered as formidable and the force opposed to you as well as the officers commanding it are by their own confession of such a description as cannot but inspire you with the fullest confidence as to the result of any future attempt they may make against you.

"Mr. Dickson,[4] whose influence among the Western Indians is very extensive, has lately made a proposal to me for a co-operation with them for the defence of Upper Canada. I have submitted the same to a board at Montreal of which Major General de Rottenburg is the head and I have reason to think I shall despatch Mr. Dickson to you for the purpose of accomplishing this object."

(Dominion Archives, C. 1220, pp. 82-84.)

Freer's letter to Sheaffe, dated at Quebec next day, read:

"I avail myself of the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres to Upper Canada to enclose to you an extract of a letter which has been written by His Excellency's orders to the Commissary General authorizing certain supplies to be provided for the militia of Upper Canada and it will be satisfactory for you to be informed that measures have been adopted for complying with that requisition and there is reas

on to believe that the several articles will be in readiness to be forwarded to you at the period stated, at the opening of navigation in the spring.

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[1] Captain William King of the United States army, taken prisoner at Frenchman's Creek.

[2] See Documentary History, 1812, Part II, pp. 287-291.

[3] Ibid, pp. 303-308.

[4] Robert Dickson, the noted trader among the Indians of the Northwest, a brother of William Dickson of Niagara and Thomas Dickson of Queenston.

"The clothing which has been approved of by His Excellency for the militia of Upper Canada consists of green jackets red cuff and collar and whitedown, blue gunmouth trowsers and felt regulation cap."

(Dominion Archives, C 1220, pp. 84-85.)

The resumption of hostilities had demonstrated the imprudence of permitting the departure of enemy aliens who might give useful information and Captain Loring addressed a letter on the subject to Colonel Claus and the other commissioners appointed for their examination.

"Gentlemen:

"I am directed by His Honor Major General Sheaffe to communicate to you his wish, for your assembling on some early day for the purpose for which you have been appointed. But as circumstances have so much changed since the date of the Proclamation under which you have been instructed to act, that the public safety may be endangered by granting Passports to the extent which was then contemplated, His Honor desires that you will report for his consideration, the cases of all claimants of Passports, and that you will suspend the granting any, until he shall have decided thereon."

When cold weather set in desertion to their homes by the militia on the frontier increased to an alarming extent and active measures were taken to bring them back. Captain Charles Askin addressed the following order to his Lieutenant, Christian McDonell, who was then apparently on leave at his own home in Haldimand.

"On the receipt of this you will immediately go with Wm Kerr & Alex Lymburner and with them take every deserter from my company in your neighborhood. David Merritt's pass will be out when you receive this and Minor Chambers's also. You will get them to assist if necessary. If not you must tell them to return immediately. You will inquire if Kerr's family are sick or not. He and Lymburner can bring three or even more prisoners. You will hasten down here for you are wanted very much. I shall expect you on Monday next. You will pass through Canborough on your way to this and assist Mr. Canby in taking and having some deserters now at that place sent down.

"Near Chippawa Decr 4th, 1812."

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

General Sheaffe described the situation as he appreciated it in a letter to Sir George Prevost dated at Fort George on December 9.

"I have to apologize to Your Excellency for the omission of intelligence from Colonel Procter when I despatched my letter of the 4th inst[*] in which it was referred to. I now have the honor of transmitting it. Appearances on the other side agree with the accounts we have lately received. There are few men to be seen. The weather is mild for the season, but as yet there is but little snow.

The desertion of our Militia has increased since the beginning of the month but I expect the voluntary return of many. I hope that the rigor of the season and the state of the River will soon permit my authorizing at least for a time the absence of a large portion of the Militia. When a bridge of ice shall be formed between us and the enemy it will require all the force we can muster to afford a chance of maintaining our position and indeed the whole will probably be inadequate to the task of preventing occasional predatory incursions. Some days ago a twenty four pounder (from Detroit) that had been remounted on one of the Batteries opposite to Black Rock burst but fortunately did no other mischief than wounding Captain Kerby slightly in the hand. The Gun has been replaced by an 18 pounder. A vessel having the appearance of one of the Enemy's gun boats was seen yesterday morning about 10 or 12 miles to the Eastward, near the American shore. A bitter north west wind was blowing last night and still continues. She has probably run back to Sacket's Harbour.

"The weather has not permitted a communication by water with York since the 21st of November and it is now deemed prudent to lay up the Prince Regent there. Colonel Vincent has adopted the same opinion respecting the Royal George and Moira at Kingston that it would be attended with too much hazard to allow them to sail, he therefore proposes laying them up there in which he does not foresee any disadvantage. There will at least be some inconvenience in their being separated from the naval depot and they run more risk from the Enemy at Kingston. I shall impress on Colonel Vincent the necessity for taking every precaution for their security."

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

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[*] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II, p. 274.

Charles Askin continued to write to his father at intervals giving him fairly full information of recent events.

"Mountain near Queenston Dec. 11th. 1812.

"Dear Father,

"Your affectionate favour of the 28th Ulto. came to hand the night before last. I am surprised to find by it that very few of the letters I have wrote you since I have been down here have reached you, the one giving an account of the Battle of Queenston went up in the Lady Prevost with some others and some newspapers and I fancy you must have got them before this. John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and newspapers and I fancy you must have got them before this. John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and distinguished themselves. William particularly who behaved as gallantly as any one engaged that day. Robt. Hamilton & Alexr. were in it also but only in the afternoon and Alex. could not take an active part in it, for he could not ride nor hardly walk on account of boils, therefore remained or went with Capt. Holcroft who was cannonading the enemy when crossing the River. I had been laying confined to my bed three days before the action with boils and so ill with them that part of the time I could not even sit up in bed to eat my Victuals. I was at George Hamilton's when the attack was made and had to get off as well as I could. I remained a short time in Queenston but finding the enemy were getting the better of us I went away to avoid being taken prisoner. An account of the battle is in one of the newspapers I sent you therefore shall defer saying anything more about it at present. Soon after an armistice was concluded which did not terminate until the 19th Ult. Our Batteries at Fort George the day after its termination opened on Fort Niagara and a cannonade was kept up all day. some houses were burnt on the other side & about as many at Navy Hall. we lost two men Capt. Fry a half pay Officer and a Soldier of the 49th Regt. and I believe the enemy lost but few. Some shots were fired from Queenston over to Lewiston but not returned. from that day we were quiet enough except now and then a false alarm until the 28th Ult. when 500 of the Enemy came over from Black Rock and landed near the Ferry below Fort Erie about 1 o'Clock in the morning most of them unobserved. they fired on our men at the Batteries who had only time to spike the Cannon and make their escape after defending themselves, but all resistance was useless against such a force. some of the Regular Artillery were killed and some wounded. Mr King was severely wounded and taken prisoner and is since dead about 40 of the 49th Regt and some Militia attacked the Enemy and drove them once or twice, but at last met with a party from Fort Erie who were coming to our support but not knowing in the dark friends from foes they fired on each other. Mr Lamont of the 49th Regt was badly wounded with three balls, he commanded a small party of his Regt, but the Americans were among them and were supposed to be Indians for they all wore blanket coats and looked so much like them in the day time that I am not surprised our men were deceived by them at night. The light company of the 41st Regt who were stationed on the river below the place of attack met the enemy when marching up to aid the 49th, they did not know they were the Americans until the word of command was given make ready, take aim the Officer commanding the 41st then attacked them (they were the advance guard of the Enemy) and he drove them back on their main body. The 41st then Retired until day light for it was impossible to know your friends from your foes. At daybreak the Enemy had all retreated and crossed the River, except Capt. King, Aid de Camp to General Smith & 35 men who were taken prisoners, a party of Sailors composed part of the force who came over, these Scoundrels set fire to some houses of Mr Douglas's & Mr Harrison's which were burnt to the ground, these fellows had to make a precipitate retreat some were killed and others taken prisoners. We lost nearly eighty men killed, wounded & those taken prisoners the prisoners have since been exchanged, the 49th & the long Point Militia suffered most. After day light the Enemy made an attempt with seventeen boats to come over we had then about eight hundred men ready to receive them and when the boats came within musket shot we poured such a brisk fire among them that the foremost boats cried out for Quarter but as it was impossible to stop the Militia from firing on them they all turned back. A three pounder was playing on them all the time and giving them plenty of Grape & Canister shot. What number the Americans lost in their attempt to cross is not known but the boats were full when they were coming to this side and only five, six, or seven men were seen to get out of most of them when they reached the other shore. In this and the Affair during the night the Enemy may have lost about two hundred men. After their failure a large force was seen to collect and upwards of fifty boats scows, &c. were filled with men horses and artillery all ready to come over (the enemy it has since been ascertained were then 7000 strong) General Smith then summoned the Garrison at

Fort Erie to surrender but an answer was sent him to say that we would not think of surrendering the place as we could repel any force he could bring against it and we only had then about fifteen hundred men at the place and hardly a Cannon to fire at them which the Enemy knew and they had at least 16 field pieces and those very fine ones. Immediately after he got the Answer instead of coming over he disembarked all his troops. Its said that part of his Army were so disgusted with him that they endeavoured to kill him and three shots were fired at him one thing seems certain that he had to fly from his Army this we have from our prisoners who have returned from there an inhabitant of the Head of the Lake, who made his escape from that side from Capt Fitzgerald who was over with a flag of truce and saw two thousand of his Army paraded to him and that hundreds were returning home. All the Militia Volunteers are gone and the Army of the Centre, as General Smith is pleased to call it was reduced by desertion & death from seven thousand to three thous[an]d. I Saw one of that cowardly Generals Proclamations lately he has the impudence to call Upper Canada part of the United States. Its a good deal like Hulls but not quite so barbarous. This General Smith was to do so much when he came that he allmost alarmed us, but he proves to be even worse than Hull. We have been quite on the alert since the business at Fort Erie and as the desertions and sickness has been very common among the Militia our force is much reduced and the duty has become very hard both on the officers and men who remain. We have lost a number of Militia Men by the Pleurisy they are taken very suddenly and very violently ill and often die in eight or nine days. Numbers of women in the Country have died also lately and what is strange you hardly hear of a Regular soldier being sick but they are used to fatigue and are well clad which is not the case with all the Militia but clothing is now given to the flank Companies some articles for nothing & some at a very low rate. We have a most Gallant Young Officer here. Col. Bishopp who commanded at Fort Erie the day General Smith pretended to come over. He does everything he can to make the Militia comfortable and does not mind a little expense, he has already ingratiated himself in their favor and he is as much liked by them I believe as General Brock was. We are in great hopes of soon having a peace, everything seems nearly settled between Sir John B. Warren & Mr Monroe. I think the Oxen had better be sold to Mr Brush at the price you mention for I should not know what to do with them here

Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters.

"I am your dutiful & Affectionate son

Charles Askin

John Askin Esq
near Sandwich

"Please thank Alex. for me for the sword he was so kind as to send me. I sent up a few things this fall which I hope you will receive by the Lady Prevost

"P.S. I have been stationed with my Company at & near Chippawa. I am now on leave of absence for a few days & am spending them here with John Robertson & to morrow I must return to my Duty. John Robertson desires his best regards to you."

(Burton Historical Library, Askin Papers)

In a letter to Hon. Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Chauncey described the success of his efforts in delaying or preventing the transportation of reinforcements and supplies from Kingston to Niagara, which had caused so much privation to the troops defending that frontier.

"Sackets Harbor, 9 Dec., 1812.

"Confidential

Sir

"On the 8th inst. I sent a flag of truce over to Kingston with Mr. Murney late owner of the sloop Elizabeth. My real motive in sending this flag over was to gain information of the strength at that place which consists of about 600 of the 49th regiment and nearly 1000 militia. They also can call in 2000 militia in 24 hours notice. That part of the Glengary regiment (say about 500) which was at Kingston at the time I made the attack upon the Royal George finding that they could not get up the Lake by water have marched to York by land. The Royal George, Earl Moira, and a schooner all loaded with military stores and clothing for the Army & Indians at Fort George have made four attempts to escape from Kingston since the 20th of November but upon seeing our blockading squadron have run back. They have now relinquished all hope of getting up this winter and have in consequence discharged the stores &c and laid up their vessels. I therefore hope to have the pleasure of conducting them into Sackets Harbor before they get another chance to get up the Lake. It is also a satisfaction to know that we have prevented the Enemy from sending to Fort George and the posts on that part of the Lake the clothing and arms that the troops may require this winter. Mr Vaughan[*] could not learn that the enemy contemplated an attack upon this place this winter; on the contrary they appeared to apprehend one from us.

"The information contained in this letter was obtained from an officer on board the Royal George who Mr. Vaughan had known for several years and who is friendly disposed towards us. It therefore may be depended upon. We shall be prepared here at all events to give them a warm reception if they should make any attempt upon us this winter."

(Captains' Letters, Navy Department MSS., Washington)

The apparent discomfort and discontent of the militia determined General Sheaffe to relieve a considerable portion of them from active duty by relays. This was announced in a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Cecil Bisshopp to Lieut.-Colonel Clark.

"Fort Erie, Dec. 13th, 1812.

"It is Major General Sheaffe's desire that all the militia be sent home. One of the flank companies of the 1st, 2d, 3d & 4th Lincoln Regiments be permitted to return home for the space of a fortnight, then to return to relieve the remaining companies of each of those corps.

"One of the flank companies of the Norfolk and York Regts. will likewise be allowed to go home but as these are at a greater distance from home than the others they will not be expected to return till three weeks have elapsed from the day of the departure of each company from its quarters. An alarm post for every company is to be established at a point most convenient to assemble at for returning to their quarters.

"A gun is intended to be placed on the hill near the entrance of Lundy's Lane to give the alarm if necessary by three discharges at intervals of five minutes.

"Particular care is to be taken of the arms and ammunition which the men are to take with them and be responsible for under the superintendence of their captains who with their subalterns are to inspect them once a week by squads, one for each officer either at the men's houses or assembled at some central convenient spot for the men composing it. The

---

[*] William Vaughan, a local sailing master, see Lossing's Fieldbook of the War of 1812, p. 262.

[illegible]
whose [illegible]
which [illegible]

Th[illegible] as poss[illegible]

Pr[illegible] given to the [illegible] to be taken for carrying them into effect immediately unless there be any obstacle of sufficient importance to justify their being suspended.

"I have the honor to be Sir
Your ob't servant
Cecil Bisshopp
"Lt Col. Clark — Lt Col Inspt Fd Officer
"Comdg 2nd Lin Militia

"On the other side is the list of the Flank Companies that will go home till the 28th Inst. then to return and relieve the others of the respective Regts

"Likewise the companies of the 2nd York and Norfolk that are to remain till the 4th of Jany

Capt Nelles's company will march to Ft Erie as well as Capt Applegarth's to-morrow morning

"To go home till 28th inst.	To remain till 28th inst.
"2nd Lin. Capt Hamilton	Capt Rowe
"3d Lin Capt Warren	Major Warren
4th Lin Capt W Crooks	Capt Nelles
"5th Lin Capt Hatt	Capt Durand
1st do Capt. Js Crooks	Capt McEwen
Till 4th Jany	Till 4th Jany
"2nd York Capt Chisholm	Capt Applegarth
1st Norfolk Capt Bostwick	Capt McCall
"2nd do Capt White	Capt Rapelgee

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

Next day Charles Askin wrote another long letter giving further information of recent events.

Dear Father "Near Queenston December 14th 1812

Your affectionate favor of the 26th Ulto I had the pleasure of receiving a few days ago and partly answered but could not go to Niagara therefore missed an opportunity of sending you an answer by the return of the Mail. I [illegible] Baldoon who [illegible] he will leave [illegible] I gave him [illegible] I have given [illegible] on the 28th [illegible] ly but our [illegible] and much to our [illegible] the American [illegible] in such an easy [illegible] h sent a Summons to [illegible] day to surrender the [illegible] then had seven thou[illegible] Black Rock and Buffa[illegible] Fort Erie to oppose [illegible] port Me tie but an ene[illegible] Gallant Young Offic[illegible] not think of doing it [illegible] could bring [illegible] embarked in [illegible] and we were [illegible] y well for most [illegible] y of his men or [illegible] om the other side [illegible] but Gen Smyth [illegible] these advantages [illegible] receiving the A[illegible] troops. Some of [illegible] m what he [illegible] d send to tell [illegible] e or four shot [illegible] One long [illegible] ered as I look [illegible] the shameful [illegible] on of the most [illegible] opposed to us this [illegible] I think here e not [illegible] should share the same fate [illegible] was a good Officer but he was [illegible] of a Gentleman to please his [illegible] give up the Command and General

[illegible] Naval Department on Lake Ontario [illegible] of this War and the Americans [illegible] & Crews are got for our Vessels, will [illegible] of that Lake next Spring. Some [illegible] taken in Sight of the Royal [illegible] ten Vessels and no exertion made to save them or [illegible] them. A Captain in the British Navy arrived yesterday at Niagara who I believe will have the Command of One and some others I believe with a Crew from Halifax are coming. Four Vessels are ordered to be built, two at Kingston and two at York, so it is no doubt that the Enemy will try every means in their power to make themselves masters of both Lakes Ontario & Erie.

"No troops I believe are yet on their way here, though it has been frequently reported there were, except twenty of the Royal Artillery and an Officer which I believe are now on the road between Kingston & this. They are much wanted here, for though we have 2 Companies of Militia Artillery on the lines, its not enough and men from the 41st & 49th have sometimes to Assist in Manning the Guns. Some troops I saw in a Montreal paper to day are on their march from Halifax to Quebec under the Command of Lt. Col. Hamilton of the 100th Regt. what number it is not said.

"I saw English papers as late as 12th Augt. there is hardly anything said about the War with the Americans, and I only see an account of one Regt. going to Halifax. I think its the 9th, though there are many of the reinforcements going to Portugal & Spain. The papers nearly filled with accounts of Lord Wellington's great Victories in Spain & Portugal. A prayer has been ordered to be used throughout the United Kingdom of Eng[land] & Ireland, thanking the Almighty for our Successes in Spain particularly for the Victory over the French at the Battle of Salamanca. No more titles can be given Lord Wellington than he already has, for he has Spanish & Portuguese ones enough to fill half a sheet of paper nearly [illegible] they are now at a loss to know what rewards to make him for his splendid achievements.

"St Regis a small town in Lower Canada which was taken some time ago by the Americans has lately been retaken by us & a company of Americans were lately taken at a place called [illegible] by a party of Militia.

"General Dearborn the Commander in Chief of the American Army is said to be going against Montreal with 16,000 men; they have not many troops in Lower Canada, yet I fancy General Dearborn will meet with a warm reception if he goes there. There are two Regts. raised in Lower Canada since the War one called the Voltigeurs & the other Voyageurs there are [illegible] Canadians in each.

"We are flattered now with finding the preparations we are making for War with hopes of a speedy and honorable peace. Sir John B. Warren is said to be at Washington and all differences between the two countries is settled except the Naturalization of British born subjects who come to

America, respecting this our Ambassador and Mr Monroe cannot agree.

"I am sorry it has not been in my power to pay the Auction Acct but intend to pay it before I get the prize money[2] for I do not know when if ever I get any. I am anxious to pay Mr Pattinson[3] the money I borrowed of him last Summer. I have been disappointed in getting money here otherwise I would have done it before this. I wish Alex. to pay what he owed me to Mr Pattinson & hope he has done it if not beg that he will now and send me a receipt of it. Mr Brush[4] gave a draft on me favour Doctr Day or Mr Eastman & cannot recollect which for one hundred dollars which he lent Major Chambers. This draft he begged me to accept which to oblige him I did at Detroit. The draft was lost in the Caledonia or Detroit so Doctr Day and Mr Eastman have both wrote me, and both of them have requested me to pay it but I have never received the money yet from Chambers tho it has been ready for me a long time indeed I could have had it any time when I pleased to call for it, but seeing no one authorized to receive it I never got it of him. The Money I think I will get now & send it to Mr Brush on his giving me a proper receipt for it mentioning every circumstance respecting the transaction that I may not hereafter be liable to pay the money & have to suffer for wishing to oblige him & his friends that Day. I would like to let Mr Brush have the grey mare at the price he [illegible] to me too I have more horses than I know what to do with. A receipt from Mr Pattinson will be all I want for that amount & I will then send her to him but he must pay the charges of her hanging up if any. I would sell her but wish him to have her again as he appeared partial to her.

"Elizabeth [illegible] the Miniature picture I have got but do not like to send it now.

"Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters

"Your dutiful and Affectionate Son
Charles Askin

"P.S. I wish it was possible to get the pistol you lent Mr Pattinson.

to John Askin Esq'r
"Care of Matthew Dolsen Esq'r
"River Thames—Sandwich."

(Burton Historical Library, Askin Papers)

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[2] Awarded for the capture of Detroit.

[3] Richard Pattinson, a merchant at Sandwich and a member of the Legislative Assembly for Essex, 1812-1816.

[4] Elijah Brush of Detroit, husband of his sister Adelaide.

An official return has been preserved of the casualties of the Second Lincoln, of which the flank companies and a considerable portion of the rest of the regiment had been on service since the declaration of war had been announced.

"List of men belonging to the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia who have been wounded or have died since the 26th of June last.

Stephen Peer	Wounded at Queenston Oct 13th since recovered
Morris Derrick (or Detrick)	
Charles Cook	Shot through the thigh at Fort Erie 28th Novr recovering slowly
Gershom Conger	Died since 28th Novr
John Clark	
*David Tallan	
*Gabriel Smith	
John Galtpo	
David Bouck	
Daniel Millard	
*Hyre Waram	
*Daniel Hackson	
Benjamin Skinner	
Orman Burge	
William Brooks	
Colin McCallum	
John Hodgkins	
James Stevenson	
Peter Wright	
*Lewis David	
George Couch	

"Note—The names marked with a (*) were single men, the others were men with families.

"Chippawa, Jany 1st, 1813.

"Thomas Clark, Lt. Col. 2nd Lincoln Militia."

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No. 43

RECORDS OF NIAGARA
A Collection of Contemporary Letters and Documents
1812

Collected and Edited
by
BRIG GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK

Published by the
Niagara Historical Society
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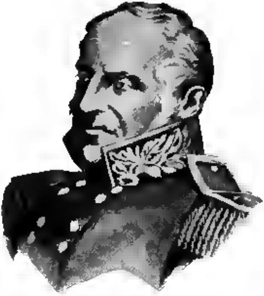

R H Sheaffe

— Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe —

PREFACE

The documents printed in the following pages have been collected from a variety of manuscript sources and will be found to complement those published in "The Documentary History of the Campaigns on the Niagara Frontier in 1812 and 1813" in 1898 and 1899 by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. They throw considerable further light on the civil and military affairs of that time.

RECORDS OF NIAGARA

No 43

1812

FROM THOMAS DICKSON TO JAMES BROCK

Queenston 11th January 1812.

Sir

Mr Addison having been very ill for these two weeks past and although the Doctors now think him out of danger he will not be able to attend at York the ensuing Session of Parliament as Chaplain to the House of Assembly by his desire therefore I now write to Mr Stuart[1] to request him to officiate for Mr Addison and the present is to request you to get His Honor the President to give his permission for Mr Stuart so to do

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedt Servant

Thomas Dickson

James Brock Esquire
Secretary to His Honor the President

(Dominion Archives Sundries, 1812)

Within a month Mr Addison had recovered sufficiently to be able to write the following letter

Niagara Feby 5th 1812

To His Excellency Genl Brock

May it please your Excellency

Mr Peters[2] having made me acquainted with the probability of a new District being formed at the Head of Lake Ontario[3] in which he contemplates to remove and establish himself and having suggested to me a desire to obtain the office of Clerk of the Peace or Register in the event of such a Division taking place. I have taken the liberty to recommend Mr. Peters to your Excellency's notice as a person whom I have long known and whom I believe to be every way qualified to fill either of these Offices above mentioned.

---

[1] Reverend George Okill Stuart minister of the Church of England at York

[2] William Birdsaye Peters, a son of Reverend Samuel Peters.

[3] Formed in 1816 as the District of Gore

I have the honor to be
your Excellency's most Obedt.
& most Hble. Servt.

Robt. Addison
Minr. of Niagara

(Dominion Archives. Sundries Upper Canada 1812)

FROM JOSEPH EDWARDS TO HON. JOHN McGILL

Niagara, 17th Jan. 1812.

Sir,—

In accounting for the above balance [£126.15.0] permit me to observe that a continuance of work for the amount has been contracted for some part of the money advanced, and about £20 of the work actually done, but the men through their tardiness being catched by the frost when, as they say, within two days of finishing, I could not examine the same. Of course they remain in part unpaid, and the whole uncharged. An exception may again be made to the purchase of spades under the impression that the law requires persons performing Statute Duty to come prepared with those articles. The British Statute does the same but implements are also furnished, and I am fully convinced that the purchase of wheelbarrows and planks in addition to the above would be of public use on that road to assist the Statute Labour when the public money is expended.

It may be thought that I have unnecessarily protracted the appropriation of the money, but I am confident the delay has been of good to the Public, since it has enabled me to see the utility of a continued ditch on one side only of the road, the water always finding its level has pointed out the places where to bridge across a channel dug to let the water pass, and has had the most happy effect on this road.

As to the £45 appropriated to the cross road in Grantham, it is untouched in my desk. Soon after it was known that the money was voted I was applied to by one Joel Austin, and who I dare say would have done the work faithfully. Not having been then appointed I could only promise to hear his proposals when that took place, he however it seems went and having boasted of having got the contract and I soon found a violent party (Methodists) each individual of which had anticipated a share of the money was formed against him After being appointed on the 5th of June I twice examined the place which I found little more than a pathway a long narrow causeway seemingly not wider than ten feet with a ditch close on each side made diagonally across the lands of a few farmers for their convenience in going to mill, in no place 30 ft wide and when speaking to some of them about moving their fences was answered that they would expect the spaces between the concessions in lieu Some time after in company with Mr Crooks and Peter Ball Esq. I again examined the road, and found the same indifference among the few we could see one would remove his fence if the other did. This is not yet done to my knowledge and until it is in my opinion any money laid out would be thrown away

I have the honor to be &c

Joseph Edwards, Commr &c.

Hon. John McGill Inspector, &c., &c., York.

The following letters show that Hugh Alexander carried on his business at Fort Erie until it was abruptly terminated by the declaration of war

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO PARKER, GERRARD, OGILVIE & CO

Fort Erie, Jany 29 1812.

When in Montreal last August I left with you twelve barrels pork and requested that the proceeds should be paid to Thos. Clark, Esqr on his acct at Montreal together with twenty barrels of flour which was still at that time at Prescot or should Capt Gilkison keep that flour he was to remit to you 45£ Currency which he informed me this fall he had done —some time after Mr Clark's return I called to know if he had received the above which he said he had not and not having heard anything from him on the subject I have now drawn on you in favor of Messrs Lee & Clark for £90 Cy which you will I trust have the goodness to honor and should the above [have] been passed to Mr Clark's credit since he left Montreal I will remit you either bill or flour early in the spring sufficient to discharge the above draft together with whatever compensation you may think right for the use of the money

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ALEXANDER REA

March 21 1812 Fort Erie

I wrote you on 3 Oct 1811 requesting you to send the whole of the phials which you had on hand when I left Montreal but have not had the pleasure to hear from you since in consequence of which I am led to believe that the letter must have been miscarried in which case if you have the said phials I will thank you to forward them to Mr McGevach as early as there will be any opportunity of forwarding as I have made promises on the supposition that they would have come last fall and the persons to whom I have promised are anxiously waiting their arrival this spring supposing they are on the communication last fall you will please advise me as soon as possible to say whether you have the phials yet or if you have sent them and what the profits are of your market this season.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ROBERT GILLESPIE

Fort Erie Mar 25 1812

Yours 20th February came to hand the 15th instant by which I am very well pleased to see the markets are looking up.

I have made an offer to Government for my pork and 200 barrels of flour but am not certain as yet whether it will be accepted or not as there is only a small quantity as yet wanted in this Province I shall be glad to hear from you as often as leisure will permit.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JABEZ D DE WITT

Fort Erie Mar 25 1812

I wrote you on the 3rd of Oct 1811 inclosing a small memorandum for some articles in your line of business but have not as yet had the pleasure to hear from you therefore have been necessitated to procure the articles from another quarter—you will therefore have the goodness not to send the articles this spring as I shall have no use for them at present

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WILLIAM ALEXANDER NEAR SCHENECTADY

Fort Erie Mar 26, 1812

The first of the month I was at Long Point and Ephraim informed me that he was to remit you some money if possible by the first of April I now enclose you sixty dollars which goes forward by mail and I hope will arrive safe and which place to his credit

I went to see McDougall but he was gone to York But left a line for me to say that he would be at this place in April and perhaps would have it in his power to pay part—business at this place is very dull at present Ephraim was well when I left Long Point and also your friends in this quarter With compliments to Mrs Alexander and family

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie March 30th 1812

Your favor of the 23rd instant came duly to hand mentioning our verbal agreement respecting the transport business this season in which I will do the business for what you have stated and part which you have omitted at 1/6 N Y C per barrel from this place to Chippawa that being the same else as last year

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie Ap 1 1812.

Agreeable to your request I called on Mr Lovejoy with your draft who mentioned he had remitted you the amount per Dr Cotham also I spoke to Mr Grosvenor presenting Mr McGevack's two accts, the one say £10.8.0 currency which he has paid to Messrs Clark and Street by request of Thomas Clark Esqr and the other small amount of £2.16.0 Cy will be more convenient for him to settle in the same way as he has a demand against John Osborne who is in Clark and Street's employ Having seen Mr Clark's acct in favor of Mr McGevack of Aug 16 1811 for the said sum of £10.8.0 per Clark and Street's receipt for the said money by Mr Osborne I am well convinced that Mr Grosvenor's statement is correct in consequence of which I now enclose to you the above two accts and also your draft on Mr Joshua Lovejoy for £9.2.0 N Y C.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CLARK AND STREET

Fort Erie April 6, 1812

Having made a contract with a Mr Goodwin at Chippawa to build a boat for me which he now informs me will be out of his power unless I can procure the plank and scantling from you for that purpose If you will therefore have the goodness to let him have the quantity I will pay you for the same and you will confer a favor on yours &c

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JAMES CROOKS

Fort Erie April 18 1812

Having a small acct with Seth Winslow on his leaving this place he sent me the enclosed draft on W & J Crooks for £9 7 3 N Y C. dated 24th instant his reason for which date is best known to himself Having just heard that he has resigned I shall request the favor of your acceptance if agreeable. If it is not in your power to accept it you will have the goodness to deliver the written draft to the bearer Mr Grant

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO W & J CROOKS

Fort Erie May 2 1812

Yours of the 24th came to hand yesterday by which I find that £5 15.8 N Y C on Mr Winslow's draft has been collected and as there is only remaining £3 11.7 due on the draft perhaps you can have it in your power the next time to draw the same as you I should expect are his agents in this quarter and in so doing you will confer a favor on yours &c.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WEST & HASBROOK, ONONDAGA

Fort Erie May 14 1812

Your favor of 22 April I received the 4th instant and in answer to which I have to state that the 70 bbls. of salt was Mr McCormick's property if returned by the time mentioned in your letter say June 1 I shall also mention to Mr Sides? to be in readiness for you the first time I see him as to the delivery of salt at this place. I am at a loss to state my price as very little is sold and if any it is on a credit of perhaps 12 months at 40/ per bbl. You will have the goodness to collect all you possibly can from Mr Mead and forward it as you mentioned to Mr McCormick If the laws will permit if not forward it to Lewiston to whoever is your agent at that place or Mr Joshua Fairbanks as you see proper

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CAPT WILLIAM MILLS

Fort Erie May 30 1812

I understand that you have a quantity of cordage on hand in which I presume you have different sizes Will you have the goodness to send by the return of the ship sixty fathoms of 6 inch or 6¼ jute cable for the Chippewa with a bill of the same and when payable If you could make it payable the 1st Oct next it would suit me best

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 24, 1812

I enclose you here my acct for baking 2350 lbs biscuit for the South West Company—amount £14 2 0 N Y C. which you will please pass to my credit. I also made use of 14 bbls flour for said biscuit which was to be replaced at Queenston four of which I have received the other ten will you have the goodness to mark H A and ship with the rest of my flour should Gray's sloop be at Queenston I should wish you to ship any flour in her to Prescott—if not, send it by the first safe vessel

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 25 1812

I have in my store 14 bbls Potash and Pearl as was marked G H for Messrs Grosvenor and Hancock Buffalo, and will be forwarded by the boat next trip you will please to ship them in the first safe vessel to Prescott and consign them to Messrs. Tappan & Sewall Montreal. All flour is from this at present.

Relations with the United States had become so unsatisfactory and menacing that instructions were issued to place the frontier military posts in Upper Canada in a suitable condition to resist an attack

FROM NOAH FREER TO LIEUT COLONEL BRUYERES R.E.

Military Secretary's Office
Quebec 3rd February 1812

Sir

I am directed by the Commander of the Forces to desire that you will take measures and give such orders as may be necessary that the following services at the posts mentioned in Upper Canada be executed with as little delay as possible viz:

Fort George

The works &c at this station to undergo such repair as is necessary to render the post tenable

Fort Chippewa

The picketting around this post to be repaired or renewed.

Fort Erie

The work already executed at this post to be closed.

Fort Amherstburg

To be made tenable

St Joseph's

The picketting at this post to be repaired or renewed

(Dominion Archives Sundries 1812)

Two letters from Charles Askin to his father then living at a house which he had named Strabane near Sandwich throw some interesting light on the proceedings of the provincial parliament.

York 24th February 1812

Dear Father

I have been here some days on business part of which is to try and get some money from the Legislature to be laid out on a road passing through the place where I live[1] and to get exchanged from the Regt of Militia to which I now belong into one in the district of Niagara which I believe I will have no difficulty in doing as the President[2] has no objection to it I had the honor of dining with him the day after my arrival here and have an invitation to a Ball he gives to night to which I intend going. The Legislature have not done much yet a bill has passed the lower House respecting the Militia. In every district there are to be two light companies to consist of one hundred men each who are to be called out six days in every month until they are perfect in their exercise. The law gives power to the President or person administering the Government to suspend such Officers of the Militia as he thinks proper. A Law respecting carriages meeting on the road has also passed the House all carriages meeting are to turn to the right and give half the road whether going or coming from Market[1]. A few days before I left home I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you and one from Johny—I cannot answer yours till I return home but hope I shall soon have an opportunity of doing it after I get there. I expected James all winter but begin to fear now I shall not see till next summer.

---

[1] The Canboro Road

[2] General Brock

Feb. 25th.

I saw Capt. Elliott[2] last night at the Dance, he told me he had a letter from Archange to Theresa.

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN, SR.

40 Mile Creek, Feby. 28th, 1812

Dear Father

I am now on my way from York where I have been some time and from which place I wrote to you a few days ago. A person who I have met here on his way to Detroit gives me a favorable opportunity of writing to you which I embrace tho I have little to say. The Legislature have done little this Session as yet and as the house is soon to be dissolved there will not be much done. A new Militia Act is passed. In every Regt. there are to be two flank companies to consist of one hundred men each which are to be out six days in every month for the purpose of training until they are perfect in their exercise, regular soldiers will be employed to drill them. I believe the house has voted £8000 to the President to be laid out in such a manner as he thinks best for having the Militia trained.

A law respecting travellers on the road meeting has also

passed the house all persons meeting in carriages or sleighs are to give half the road and after December next no one is to drive a sleigh without Bells.

---

[1] Entitled "An Act to Prevent Damages to Travellers on the Highways in this Province."

[2] Mathew Elliott, then member of the Legislative Assembly for the County of Essex.

Mr Nichol[3] was committed to Gaol in York by a warrant from the Speaker of the House of Commons the day before I left it this was for writing something to Major Halton[4] offensive to them in justification of his conduct when wrongfully accused by that House of not having accounted for Public money in his hands—it is so lengthy a business that I shall not enter more fully into it as I should then not be able to give you all the particulars of it[5]—and you will have the whole of it from the members when they return home which will be soon

Orders have been received lately from Below to fortify York I met the Engineer here this evening from Niagara on his way there (probably for that purpose)

(Askin Papers Burton Historical Library Detroit)

By a proclamation dated at York on 25th February 1812 the following persons were appointed commissioners in the Niagara District to carry into effect the Act recently passed for the prevention of seditious conduct Joseph Edwards of Niagara John Warren Sen. of Bertie John Warren of Bertie Samuel Street of Willoughby Thomas Clark of Stamford Thomas Dickson of Queenston William Crooke of Grimsby and Samuel Hatt of Ancaster all of them being magistrates. The letter of Thomas Clark acknowledging his appointment has been preserved.

FROM THOMAS CLARK TO JAMES BROCK

Stamford March 12th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ulto. inclosing a Commission from His Honor the President empowering me to carry into effect an Act passed in the Fourth Session of the Third Provincial Parliament of this Province—entitled an Act for the better securing this Province against all seditious attempts or designs to disturb the tranquility thereof

---

[3] Robert Nichol, then a commissioner for highways in the London District

[4] William Halton civil secretary to Lieut.-Governor Gore

[5] See Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol XIX, pp 10-19

To which Commission, please make known to His Honor the President that strict attention will be paid by,

Sir

Your most obedt. servt.

Thomas Clark

James Brock Esqr &c. &c. &c.

(Dominion Archives Sundries 1812)

The following petition from three enterprising inhabitants throws some light on economic conditions.

To His Honor Isaac Brock, Esquire, President administering the Government of the Province of Upper Canada and Major General commanding His Majesty's Forces within the same

The Petition of James Macklem, John Fanning and Benjamin Hardison of the District of Niagara, Gentlemen.

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioners four years since laid before His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore a Petition praying for a Grant of a certain mill seat lying below the mouth of the river Welland or Chippawa in the Township of Stamford wherefrom His Excellency promised that he would do everything which laid in his power in our behalf but probably owing to a multiplicity of business which engaged his attention we never obtained a final answer on the subject.

Your petitioners have resided in this Province about twenty years during which period it has been their highest ambition to promote its true Interest and Prosperity by the encouragement of its population and by the promotion of Works of Public utility which exertions they conceive have been crowned with a Success in most respects equal to their wishes. One of your Petitioners John Fanning has been at heavy expense in erecting Mills in this part of the Province particularly one at Black Creek which was consumed by fire in February last whereby he sustained a loss of two thousand Bushels of Wheat

It is impossible for us to point out the great want of Mills in this part of the Province the Mills now erected at the Falls and at Bridgewater cannot manufacture near the quantity of Grain now raised in this Quarter of the Country, and there are now in the aforesaid Mills upwards of twenty thousand bushels of Wheat though the inhabitants cannot obtain sufficient Flour for their own consumption. The said

Mills being possessed by a company who adopt such Rules and Regulations respecting them as best suit themselves the inhabitants having no alternative but to comply with those Measures consider themselves much aggrieved and burthened.[b] Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honor will be pleased to take this Grievance into your wise consideration together with the aforesaid Petition laid before His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore.

But if your Honor do not think proper to grant to your Petitioners the said Mill seat we most earnestly hope and pray that your Honor will not cause it to be granted to the aforesaid Company[c] but to some worthy Person wholly unconnected with said Company.

If in the opinion of your Honor this Petition would have greater weight with you by having the support of five hundred of the most respectable inhabitants in this Quarter their Signatures for that purpose may be obtained within a few Days.

We further pray that your Honor will be pleased to cause the Honorable Council to take this into their wise consideration and give us an answer to our former Petition which was ably supported by the most respectable inhabitants in this part of the Province.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray

James Macklem[d]
District of Niagara — John Fanning[e]
March 31st 1812 — Benjamin Hardison[f]

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

The amended Militia Act was formally assented to on March 6th when the provincial parliament was prorogued

and very soon after orders were sent to the commanding officers of all regiments to assemble their men and call for volunteers to form the flank companies to be trained for six days in each month until reported efficient. Several of the reports of these officers have been preserved.

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[b] This discontent seems to have found expression in the election of John Fanning as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln in May 1812. He died soon after and was succeeded by Isaac Swayze.

[c] Apparently Clark and Street.

[d] He had immigrated from Pennsylvania about 1784 and established a store at Chippewa (see Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XXVI, p. 251.)

[e] Fanning had come to Upper Canada about 1781 from South Carolina, where he forfeited property, as a Loyalist, valued at £1193 10s, and married the daughter of a Loyalist. He had managed an inn at Chippawa for several years.

[f] He had lived in the province since 1776 and had been a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln and Norfolk, 1797-1800. See Papers and Records, Ontario Historical Society, XXIV, p. 70.

FROM COLONEL RALFE CLENCH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Niagara, 1st April 1812

Sir

I enclose the return of the First Regiment of the County of Lincoln Militia by which you will see our total strength with the number of our loyal men who volunteered. You will likewise notice the great number who did not and I am happy to say that the major part of those persons are people from the United States lately with a few of our malcontent settlers in the towns of Niagara and Queenston and village of St. Davids where Captain Robertson[1] mostly reside.

I also enclose a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Kerr[2] which he has stated to me personally to be his resignation. This you will please lay before His Honor the President, and I will thank you to let me know his pleasure thereon as soon as possible.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Stamford, April 3rd, 1812

Sir

I had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ulto. in consequence of which the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia under my command was called out and met yesterday in the Township of Thorold when the supplementary Militia Law was explained as fully as in my power. Herein you have the field return of the regiment by which it will appear that out of 550 men 522 volunteered to be trained and exercised in the flank companies when and in what manner may be directed by His Honor the President.

By the return you will perceive that two of my companies are without captains. Captains Warner & Reilly[3] having some time ago resigned from infirmity & old age. Should His Honor the President think proper to appoint others in their place give me leave to recommend Mr. Robert Grant of Queenston who has formerly been a captain of militia in the Western District and Lieut. John Decow, the oldest lieutenant in my Regiment.

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[1] William Robertson, promoted to be Major, 1 June, 1812 and Lieutenant-Colonel 27 June, 1812.

[2] Dr. Robert Kerr.

[3] Probably Christian Warner and John Reilly, both of whom had been sergeants in Butler's Rangers.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN WARREN[a] TO MAJOR GENERAL SHAW

Fort Erie, 12th April 1812

Sir

I have had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ulto. with the supplementary to the Militia Law passed the last Session of the Legislature, saying

That His Honor the President was anxious that the provisions therein contained should be explained to the men under my command and that whatever measures His Honor might find it expedient to adopt he would dispense with a ballot until the last emergency.

I have great satisfaction in acquainting you that the behavior of the 3rd Regiment of Lincoln Militia has precluded the necessity of a ballot. Four companies of the Regiment are resident in the Townships of Bertie and Humberstone, the other four companies reside in Willoughby, Crowland and Wainfleet on the east side of the Chippawa to the distance of thirty miles up that creek. It therefore became me to consider the ease of the men by lessening the fatigue of their assembling at too great a distance from their farms. The first four companies were ordered to assemble in Bertie on the 9th instant and the other four companies to form at the mouth of the Chippawa on the 10th, at both of which places I attended.

Of the companies of Bertie and Humberstone every man voluntarily turned out to the number of two hundred and six. The four companies at Chippawa also behaved well, out of two hundred and eleven on parade, only five stood fast.

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[a] John Warren, Sr., had come to Canada with the 8th Regiment as a drummer, but was appointed about 1780 assistant commissary at Fort Erie and held that appointment until his death in 1813. He was one of the first Justices of the Peace in the district of Nassau and the first Collector of Customs at the port of Fort Erie Passage with an outport at Long Point and inspector of pot and pearl ashes.

While the circles were formed at both places and I had read and explained the act the officers were called upon to step forward and take the oath and after setting the example not the least hesitation was made and every man, officers and privates stood around while Messrs Street and Crowell Wilson administered it.

(Dominion Archives Militia Papers, U C., 1812)

A circular letter from Brock was sent to twenty five officers commanding regiments of militia including the five regiments of the County of Lincoln, giving them carefully considered instructions for the organization and training of the flank companies to be formed in their regiments.

Head Quarters York 8th April, 1812

Sir,

The power which is vested in the person administering the government by the amended act of the militia passed the last session of the Provincial Parliament of forming two flank companies to be taken indiscriminately from the battalion being limited to the end of the ensuing session would almost deter me from incurring public expense upon a system which will cease to operate before its utility and efficacy can well be ascertained

But being anxious at this important crisis to organize an armed force with a view to future exigencies and likewise to demonstrate by practical experience the degree of facility with which it may be trained for service I have to request you to adopt immediate measures for forming and completing from among such men as voluntarily offer to serve two companies not to exceed 1 captain 2 subalterns, 2 sergeants 1 drummer and 40 rank and file each in the regiment under your command

You will have the goodness to recommend who you conceive the best qualified to undertake this important duty. The nomination of the subalterns is left to your discretion

Such other regiments as are conveniently situated to receive military instruction shall have an opportunity offered them of shewing their ardor in the public service which cannot fail creating a laudable emulation among the different corps.

Assisted by your zeal prudence and intelligence I entertain the pleasing hope of meeting with very considerable success and of being able to establish the sound policy of rendering permanent at the end of the present war a code of military instruction little burdensome to individuals and every way calculated to secure a powerful internal defence against hostile aggression

Printed rules and regulations for your future guidance shall be forwarded as soon as possible, the most simple and at the same time the most useful movements have been selected for the practice of the militia

Experience has shown the absolute necessity of adopting every possible precaution to preserve in a proper state the arms issued to the militia and of guarding against the heavy defalcations that have heretofore occurred.

For which purpose you are authorized to prepare one or more depots in situations the most safe and convenient for assembling and drilling the men by squads and where the arms are to be lodged after each day of exercise

You are allowed to charge in your contingent account at the rate of five pounds yearly for every twenty muskets issued for the use of the men which sum it is supposed will prove ample to defray every expense of keeping the arms and accoutrements in a complete state of repair

You will make application to the officer commanding at Fort George[1] for the number of arms and accoutrements wanting to complete the men actually engaged to serve in the flank companies and that officer has been instructed to comply with your requisition upon your transmitting duplicate receipts one of which is to be forwarded to head quarters that you may become responsible for the articles delivered to your order at the same time the most liberal construction will be given to any representation accounting for such contingencies as are incident to the service

John Clark[2] has been appointed to perform the duties of adjutant under your command. Should you find him incompetent to the task you will feel it your duty to report the circumstances from whatever source it may arise

I cannot dismiss this subject without expressing my expectations that your knowledge of the localities of the country will enable you to make such arrangements as will give the utmost facility to the important object in view without subjecting the men to any material inconvenience. Coming generously forward with an offer of their services they are the more entitled to every consideration

Not only the place but likewise the time for assembling the companies or squads will be strictly attended to by you It is my earnest wish that the little the men have to learn

may be acquired by way of a pastime and not looked upon in the light of an irksome restraint. The generality of the inhabitants being already acquainted with the use of the musket have the less to learn. You may therefore under the existing circumstances limit the parade of the companies to three times in each month.

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[1] Other regiments were authorized to draw arms, &c from Kingston York and Amherstburg according to convenience

[2] For the 1st Regiment of Lincoln James Kerby was appointed adjutant of the 2nd, Henry Trout of the 3rd, John Taylor of the 4th, and John W. McIntyre of the 5th Lieut.-Colonel Johnson Butler commanded the 4th and Major Richard Hatt, the 5th Lincoln.

A little attention on the part of the men will very soon enable you to reduce even that short term of attendance. The chief object of the flank companies is to have constantly in readiness a force composed of loyal, brave and respectable young men, so far instructed as to enable the Government on any emergency to engraft such portion of the militia as may be necessary on a stock capable of giving aid in forming them for military service. To your prudence and exertions I confidently look for the attainment of a system so evidently conducive to the safety and tranquility of the province.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C.M.D. 31)

The following documents give some indication of the care taken by Brock to appoint trusty returning officers and fix the date of the polling at a time agreeable to the candidates favored by him.

Queenston, 13th May, 1812.

Received from Archibald Oliver, Corporal 41st Regiment, on this Thirteenth day of May, 1812, one parcel containing Writs and Instructions for me as Returning Officer of Members for the Third Riding of the County of Lincoln to serve in the new Parliament at the ensuing Election.

James Kerby

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

Burford, 6th May, 1812.

Received from the bearers, two Natives, the packet containing the Writ of Election, &c.

Sir, your most
obedient and humble
Servant,

(Unaddressed) William D. Bowen

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

FROM J B ROUSSEAU TO JAMES BROCK

Ancaster 19th May 1812

Sir,

I enclose you two receipts one from Mr Wm D Bowen the other from Mr John Bostwick, acknowledging having received their Writs of Election

Mr Hepburn's[A] and Durand's I delivered myself I took notice of your direction not to forward Mr Bostwick's too early But the Man that I sent to Col. Nichol with Col Talbot's letter got there sooner than I expected of course he received it a few days earlier than you wished I hope it may be no ways material

I enclose you a letter from Mr Bostwick, also one for His Honor the President.

I am Sir
your very obedient
humble servant

J B Rousseau

James Brock Esqr

(Dominion Archives Sundries 1812)

A letter from Charles Askin to his father announcing the purchase of the mills and adjacent lands in the township of Canboro

Canborough May 22nd 1812

Dear Father

I have been anxiously waiting to have an opportunity to write to inform you that I had jointly with Alexr Hamilton purchased of George Hamilton (who has lately bought of Mr Canby) the Mills[B] and one thousand acres of land situated near them which we have for some time past leased for these we are to pay £2000 N Y C[C] in ten years in goods at retail price payable by installment—this I do not conceive to be more than about £1500 in money and the land at the lowest valuation is worth 10/ an acre which would reduce the Mills dwelling house Distillery and other house to £1000 which is thought very little for them had it been in my power to have consulted you before I made the bargain I should have done it but it was impossible to do it for unless it was made immediately when it was proposed there were a great chance of it falling through and were I to have declined making the

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[A] Probably William G Hepburn

[B] Probably the mills built by Canby on Moore's Creek (see Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society Vol XXIV pp 36-38)

[C] $10 000.

bargain I was making Alexr Hamilton lose what he thought a good one for he would have nothing to do with the business unless I joined him—George Hamilton bought 14,000 acres of this Township on part of which were the Mills for which he pays £7000 in 5 years with interest—this bargain is considered an excellent one by Mr Thomas Clark Mr Dickson[1] & some others who have speculated a good deal themselves in land & know the value of it well—Though I have no society here and have little or no amusement I am well pleased with my situation for I am kept busy and have not time to be lonesome and I think my prospects of making something are greater than they were in any situation I have been in—I intend to leave this in a month to go and pay you a visit and should I have time I shall go to St Josephs to see Johny[2]

I am in haste and must conclude Please give my love to my dear Mother my Brothers and Sister

(Askin Papers Burton Historical Library Detroit)

A list of ships on Lake Ontario in 1811 1812, compiled from returns of lighthouse dues collected at Niagara and York, shows that commerce was actively conducted by water

Schooner	Ontario	87 tons
"	Niagara	55 tons
"	Collector	50½ tons
"	Prince Edward	72 tons
"	Julia	53 tons
"	Fair American	82½ tons
"	Governor Simcoe	136 tons
Sloop	Elizabeth	48 tons
Schooner	Lady Gore	46 tons
"	Genl Hunter	36 tons
"	Mary	35 tons
"	Two Brothers	36 tons
"	Eagle	26 tons
"	British Queen	23 tons
"	Sophia	25 tons
"	Lark	26 tons
Sloop	Marianne	36 tons
Schooner	Experiment	55 tons
Sloop	Enterprise	21 tons
Schooner	Charles and Ann	99 tons
"	Lord Nelson	46 tons
Sloop	Republican	17 tons
Schooner	Mary	51 tons

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[1] William Dickson of Niagara.

[2] His half-brother John Askin Jr., storekeeper for the Indian Department at St Joseph's Island

The Ontario Niagara Collector Julia Fair American Experiment Charles and Ann Lord Nelson and Mary were purchased by the Navy Department of the United States and armed as ships of war Several others were employed as transports by the British naval authorities

The remarkable success in recruiting the flank companies of the militia with volunteers was promptly acknowledged by General Brock in a public manner

Circular Government House.

York 25th May 1812

Militia General Order

The very satisfactory reports made to the President by the officers commanding corps of the spirit and zeal manifested by the men in volunteering their services for the flank companies has afforded His Honor the most lively gratification and confirmed the opinion which he was always disposed to entertain of their determination to defend bravely their country and in emulation of their veteran fathers evince by deeds the ardent loyalty they have so often professed Conduct so honorable and dignified has not failed making a deep impression on the Provincial Government and to increase if possible their anxious desire to contribute everything in their power towards the comfort and happiness of the people

With this view they have humbly solicited His Royal Highness the Prince Regent for his gracious permission to allot to the wives and children of such soldiers militia and marines who may be killed in the present contest[1] a portion of the waste lands of the Crown and to afford relief to such as may be disabled in the service for whom no provision is otherwise provided

By command of the President

Æneas Shaw.

Adj Genl Militia

Upper Canada

(Dominion Archives Militia Papers M D 31)

A letter from George Hamilton to Thomas McKee apparently about the middle of May gives a striking account of military activity

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[1] War was not actually declared by the United States until June 18

Queenston May — 1812

The Americans are assembling & sending troops as fast as in their power. A company came in yesterday & one the day before & another expected to-day & another to-morrow & so on to the end of the week. I can assure that the river has at present quite a martial appearance. The two forts so close below the Royal George at anchor between them the American frigate[1] expected up every day a large scow & bateau filled with soldiers hauling stone for the garrison at York huts with soldiers on one side an encampment at McBride's on the other another at Miller's & stragglers at Lewiston. Capt Powell[2] & riflemen at the great guns Crooks[3] & his flankers in the yard here all yesterday Alexr[4] & his troopers on their way to the 12. McEwen[5] and his flankers there also. Capt Bullock[6] is indefatigable with the flankers on the mountain & with Col Clark has been drilling them every day for this week past. If the Yankees come after all the Devil is in them especially when my troopers[7] take the field we'll chop off their heads like heads of thistles

(Toronto Public Library)

A letter from George Hamilton to his father in law contains further details of the active preparations in progress for the defence of the frontier.

FROM GEORGE HAMILTON TO WILLIAM JARVIS

Niagara, 5th June 1812

Dear Sir

The Royal George is now at the wharf with 250 recruits belonging to the 41st Regiment and the Gloster in sight with 50 more on board which you will agree with me is no contemptible addition to our forces here. Yesterday we had a grand display on the plains. Col Procter with the 41st Regt in the centre Major Merritt with his light horse on the right and Captain Powell with his company of artillery on the left and to do them no more than justice they fired remarkably well The General[1] appeared highly pleased with them as also the Sheriff's troop The General was pleased to say the other day he wished another troop to be raised in Stamford and from that to Fort Erie and wished me to take the command of it which I had not the slightest objection to informing me that Merritt was to be Major of the whole As Alexander [Hamilton] who is Captain of the troop here had gone to Long Point and did not make his appearance I took possession of his jacket and accoutrements which luckily suited me exactly and appeared with Merritt as Captain of the troop and was complimented on my appearance and the new dress I had taken care however beforehand to state the case fairly and on waiting on the General afterwards he did not seem displeased but directed me to call on him to-morrow and he would present me with my commission I dined with him afterwards and am now here again only waiting his return from the garrison to be dubbed captain and the intent of this long preamble is to beg of you to assist me in getting my accoutrements

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[1] The Oneida

[2] Captain John Powell 1st Lincoln Artillery

[3] Captain James Crooks, 1st Lincoln

[4] Captain Alexander Hamilton 1st Troop, Niagara Light Dragoons

[5] Captain John McEwen, 1st Lincoln

[6] Captain Richard Bullock 41st Regiment, Adjutant-General of Militia, 1838-1839

[7] He was then enlisting a second Troop for the Niagara Light Dragoons, which was never completed

(Toronto Public Library)

The first act of hostility on Lake Ontario was the capture of the merchant schooner Lord Nelson owned by William and James Crooks of Grimsby by the United States brig of war Oneida acting under special instructions from superior authority of which the following official account was given by her commander Captain Melancthon T Woolsey in a letter to Paul Hamilton Secretary of the Navy

U S Brig Oneida
Sackets Harbour Roads
June 9th 1812

Sir

I have the honour to inform you that I sailed on the 3rd instant on a cruise to the Westward On the 4th (off Pultney Ville) discovered three sail to windward apparently standing in for Genesee River—gave chase to them but night coming on and the weather being too hazey to run in for the mouth of the river haul'd off shore for the night under short sail At day light on the 5th discovered two schooners (supposed to be two of the three we had chased the day before) standing in for the land At 7 p m we brought to one of the schooners which proved to be the Lord Nelson from Prescott (a port opposite Ogdensburgh on the St Lawrence) said to be bound to Newark in Canada she had no papers on board other than a loose Journal and a bill of lading of a part of her Cargo, but no register license or clearance w[h]ether it was intended to smuggle her Cargo on our shores or w[h]ether she was hovering along our shores to take on board property for the Canada market in violation of the Embargo law I was not able to determine But appearances were such as to warrant a suspicion of her intention to smuggle both ways I accordingly took her crew out and sent her in with my gunner on board as prize master to this port After dispatching her I stood off shore in chase of the other schooner which the master of the Lord Nelson informed me was the Mary Hatt[1] also a British schooner but finding that she had crossed the line I hove up for this port in order to lay up the prize and make my report to the Department All the proofs which I can collect respecting her voyage I will transmit without delay to the District Attorney

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[1] Brock

In compliance with the recommendation from the President of the United States on April 1 the Congress had passed an act laying a general embargo for sixty days on all vessels then in port or hereafter arriving as a preliminary to a declaration of war The instructions sent to Woolsey soon after were so vague as to enable him to make seizures at discretion

Navy Department April 8 1812

Sir

You will herewith receive a copy of the 'act laying an embargo &c' passed the 4th instant You will use all the means in your power to enforce this law

Advise and co operate with the collector of customs

The proper objects of seizure are all vessels acting or found under such circumstances as may satisfy a strong suspicion of their intention to act in violation of this law

In enforcing this law we are not to violate the territorial jurisdiction of a foreign state

All vessels seized under this law are to be sent into port for adjudication the papers found on board of them are to be placed in the hands of the district attorney who will thereupon proceed according to law

Paul Hamilton

M T Woolsey Lieut Commanding

Brig Oneida Sackett s Harbor New York[2]

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[1] Named in honour of a daughter of Richard Hatt of Ancaster

[2] Statement of the seizure of the British Schooner Lord Nelson, by an American Vessel of War on the 5th June, 1812 thirteen days before the late war with the United States, Hamilton Journal and Express Office 1841, p 12

The Lord Nelson was a new ship built at Niagara in 1811 and very well constructed. As soon as her seizure was made known to them one of the owners went to Sackett's Harbour and offered to give security to abide the decision of the court of the United States on the charge of a violation of the embargo but the release of the ship was refused. The declaration of war soon after put an end to all intercourse and under an interlocutory decree the Lord Nelson was sold and purchased for the Navy Department of the United States. She was converted into a gunboat renamed the Scourge and armed with ten guns. The purchase money $2,000.25 was paid into the hands of Theron Rudd clerk of the court to await a final decision of that court as to its disposal. On the night of August 9, 1813 while carrying all sail to escape from the British squadron the Scourge was struck by heavy squall and overset with the loss of most of her crew of fifty men. After the conclusion of peace a claim was made for compensation for an illegal seizure and in July 1817 a decree of the court was obtained for the payment to the owners of the money held by the clerk but it was discovered that he had appropriated it to his own use and become bankrupt. After the death of William Crooks the suit was prosecuted against the government of the United States by Hon. James Crooks his brother and after his death by their heirs and after the death of those heirs by their heirs. They valued the schooner at $5,000 and her cargo at $2,943.76. Their claim was kept before Congress for nearly a hundred years. Its justice was repeatedly admitted and two Presidents urged its payment in messages. Finally on the 1st May, 1914 judgment was given for the claimant in the sum of $5,000 with interest at four per cent per annum for ninety two years making in all nearly $24,000.

Returns compiled early in July showed that the flank companies of most of the Lincoln regiments were much over the strength originally authorized. On July 3 Captain Samuel Hatt's and Captain James Durand's flank companies of the 5th Lincoln were each reported to consist of three officers, two sergeants and seventy two rank and file while Captain Jacob A. Ball's battalion company of the same regiment only numbered two officers, three sergeants and twenty two rank and file and Captain John D. Servos's numbered three officers, three sergeants and twenty five rank and file. Nine hundred men from the flank companies of the Lincoln and York militia were ordered to march to the Niagara frontier and arranged in four divisions, the first or right division to be stationed at Fort Erie, the second at

Chippawa, the third at Queenston and the fourth at Fort George. The strength of the detachment for the right division was fixed at three hundred men and each of the others at two hundred. The first and second divisions were to receive orders through Lieut. Colonel Thomas Clark and the third and fourth through Colonel William Claus. On July 7 the third division was composed of four officers, three sergeants, one drummer and one hundred rank and file of the 41st Regiment commanded by Capt. P. L. Chambers, one sergeant and three troopers of the Niagara Light Dragoons, a captain, a sergeant and twelve rank and file of the Lincoln Artillery, Captain Samuel Hatt's flank company of the 5th Lincoln of three officers, three sergeants and sixty three rank and file, Captain James Durand's flank company of the 5th Lincoln of three officers, two sergeants and sixty six rank and file, Captain John Chisholm's flank company of the 2nd York of three officers, two sergeants and thirty four rank and file, and Captain William Applegarth's flank company of the 2nd York of two officers, three sergeants and forty-five rank and file. This body of militia, numbering 246 of all ranks, was placed under the command of Captain Hatt.

The detachment forming the fourth division consisted of Captain James Crooks's flank company of the 1st Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and sixty two rank and file, Captain John McEwen's flank company of the 1st Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and sixty-seven rank and file, Captain Lyon's rifle company of three officers, two sergeants and twenty four rank and file, Captain Abraham Nelles's flank company of the 4th Lincoln of three officers, three sergeants and seventy seven rank and file, and Captain William Crooks's company of the 4th Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and seventy two rank and file. Making a force of 334 of all ranks, it was commanded by Lieut. Colonel Johnson Butler[*] of the 4th Lincoln.

The roll book of Captain John D. Servos's company of militia contains a list of persons excused or incapacitated from military service which is not without some local interest.

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[*] He died on service, 1st September, 1812, and was buried in the family burial plot.

Roll of males in the limits of Captain John D Servos' company 1st Regt. (Lincoln Militia) September 7 1812

Age		Infirm	Remarks
67	Peter Ball		Half pay officer
56	Thomas Butler[1]		do. do.
60	Bernard Frey[2]		do. do.
62	John Clement[3]		do do
46	Benjamin Pickard		Miller
55	Frederick Manual		Militia officer resigned
26	Charles Rolls[4]		Militia officer in England
76	Joseph Anderson		
58	Joshua Ferris		
57	John Curtis	Infirm	
51	George Husen		
21	John Husen	Infirm	
62	John Bone Sen.	do.	
40	John Bone		In the pillory
62	Ezekiel Cudney		
57	George Lawrence[5]		Capt militia, resigned
52	Robert Donaldson	Infirm	
48	James Clement[6]		Militia officer resigned
22	John Thompson	Infirm	
61	Robert Thompson	do.	
63	Amos McKinney		
55	Marlow Riley	Infirm	
53	Jesse Loder	do.	
50	John Ball		Magistrate
64	John Stiver		
69	Castle Corwin[7]		
60	Michael Bellinger		
54	Samuel Parks		Armourer
56	Garret Slingerland	Infirm	
54	John Secord	Deaf	
71	Johnathan Lawrence		
60	John Hays	Infirm	
58	John Welman	do	
46	Josiah Corbin	do.	

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[1] Died December 1812

[2] Killed in action 21 November 1812.

[3] Died 1842 aged 87.

[4] Died 1867 aged 82

[5] Died 1848, aged 81.

[6] Died March, 1813 aged 48

[7] Died 1838 aged 88

The termination of the armistice by the government of the United States was announced by General Brock in a forceful district general order

Fort George Sept. 8th 1812

D G O

Major General Brock was disposed to view the armistice as the forerunner of a restoration of peace and amity with the United States The pretexts on which their declaration of war was chiefly founded having been removed by the British Government and an opening offered by it to an adjustment of all difficulties of minor importance between the two countries. But in vain has Great Britain thus held out the hand of conciliation It has been rejected The President of the United States having thought fit to direct their troops to resort again to active warfare and what motive can exist for his authorizing a renewal of hostilities at the same time too (as is confidently asserted) that he has sent an ambassador to England to treat for peace

Is it to facilitate its attainment that he by his own voluntary act places the two countries in a situation to inflict mutually the horrors of war, thereby to have their minds the more embittered towards each other? Perhaps indeed he may imagine that by conquest on the side of Canada he can indemnify the United States for the loss to which they were exposed on the Atlantic side from the superiority of the naval power of Great Britain and that with a portion of her provinces in their possession more favorable terms would be obtained in a negotiation for peace but the militia of this province have too just and manly a sense of what they owe to their own personal dignity and independence to be disposed of at the will of the chief magistrate of any foreign country They will not sink to the degradation of unresistingly becoming a make weight to be thrown by his hand into the scale—such baseness belongs not to them They have already offered to the world an instance of what can be effected by the aid of their loyalty and valour and Major General Brock relies with confidence on the continued exertion of these ennobling qualities for defeating any design on this province and for contributing no less honorably for themselves than usefully to their families to their King and their country towards bringing the contest in which the implacable enmity of the American Government has engaged us to a favorable issue By order

Thos. Evans.
B M

D G O

Major Genl Brock commanding will inspect the barracks occupied by the militia in this garrison in the course of to-morrow

By order

Thos Evans

B M

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers 1812)

The reluctance of many of the recent immigrants to perform military duty is shown by the following letter from the commanding officer of the second regiment of Lincoln militia

FROM LIEUT -COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO CAPTAIN CHARLES ASKIN

Chippawa, September 24th 1812

Sir

I wrote you on the 8th of this month that 40 of the men attached to your company had not attended at this place to be inspected & take the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act Some of these however have since attended at this place and taken the oath. Those of the inclosed list I have neither seen nor heard of You will therefore see that they and each of them immediately take & subscribe before some magistrate the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act and according to the militia General Order to that effect & so soon as possible afterwards report to me accordingly and be particular if any there be who may refuse to take the oath

I am Sir

your very obedt servt

Thomas Clark Lt.-Col

2nd Lincoln Militia

To Capt. Charles Askin
or officer commanding
company of militia at
Canberry & Lower Haldimand

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers 1812)

An unpublished letter from Sir George Prevost to General Brock demonstrates his earnest desire to avoid further hostilities by refraining carefully from all offensive operations.

Head Quarters Montreal
30th September 1812

Sir

I have been honored with your letter of the 18th inst. Having received information that the revocation of the Orders in Council the conciliatory disposition shown by His Majesty's Government towards the United States and the knowledge of the pacific advances made have produced throughout America the best effects upon the public opinion so as to render the war extremely unpopular I should consider it extremely unfortunate if any temptation or provocation should induce you to abandon those defensive operations suited to the present state of the contest and which it has become both prudent and politic to persevere in observing

I can derive no satisfaction from any result that may attend Captain Muir's movement against Fort Wayne however favorable to our arms as it does not accord with my instructions to you founded upon those I have received from the King's Ministers and is moreover not calculated upon the present military resources of this command

I supposed an extreme case when I desired a co-operation from the forces in Upper Canada such as the evacuation of Montreal and the King's troops falling back upon Quebec before an overwhelming force It is in that event a combination of movement upon Lower Canada with your disposable force may have the effect I then mentioned

A very unpleasant report has reached my ear of want of decision and energy in the conduct of Major Heathcote commanding the Newfoundland Fencibles upon a late occasion when the detachment under his orders was attacked near Prescott It may be proper to institute an inquiry into the circumstances of that affair and if misconduct is established to mark it with reprobation You will therefore give the necessary orders thereon to Colonel Vincent

I shall not fail in communicating to Sir John Warren (our appointed negotiator with the United States) the sentiments you entertain respecting the Indians but I cannot disguise from you that it is my opinion that the present policy of Great Britain being earnestly to get rid of the difficulties occasioned by the war with America little disposition will be manifested to espouse with warmth the cause of our Indian allies I may be mistaken but Sir John must be requested to transmit to the Secretary of State the memorial sent him which had been presented to me by the Montreal merchants. You must therefore avoid committing our Government either by promise or treaty, but on the contrary restrain and control their measures so as to prevent that irritation in the United States which may render their very name an insurmountable obstacle to future arrangements in their behalf.

I have complied with your request with regard to the advance of £5,000 to the Receiver General of Upper Canada for the civil expenditure of that province and as I understand from Lieutenant Colonel Nichol that he is to be furnished with a letter of credit from the Receiver General to enable him to make the purchases of the necessaries you want,[1] I have directed the Commissary General to advance to Lieutenant Colonel Nichol to the amount of £5 000 should he require it on the account of the Receiver General; should he require less than that amount the balance will be transmitted by him in army bills to the Receiver General. Colonel Vincent having also signified to me the necessity of furnishing Mr. Ross the Commissary at Kingston, with £4,000 for the subsistence of the militia and paying the fresh beef contractors for Kingston Leeds and Cornwall and other expenses of those districts I have directed that amount in army bills to be sent to him and Lieut Colonel Nichol will take charge of them The Receiver General will of course forward to the Commissary General his receipt for the £5,000 including as a part thereof whatever amount Lieutenant Colonel Nichol shall have received on his account.

(Dominion Archives, C 1218, pp 443–445)

A short letter from Colonel Claus evidently written in much haste unaddressed and misdated giving an inaccurate account of the capture of two British ships at anchor near Fort Erie has been preserved

Fort George 8th Oct 1812

Dr Sir

On the 14th Ultmo Col Elliott with Captain McKee & about 600 Indians left Amherstburg on an Expedition against Fort Wayne on the head of one of the branches of the Miami & was to be followed by Captain Muir with about 300 of the 41st Regt and Militia. The enclosed copy of Col Elliott's letter to me of the 3rd Instant which I send this day will shew you the failure of the expedition

On the night of the 9 Inst a number of boats from Buffalo Creek made a circuit in the Lake & drop[p]ed down to Fort Erie & cut adrift the brig Detroit & sc[h]ooner

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[1] Blankets, clothing and camp equipage for the militia on duty

Caledonia N.W. vessel—the former drifted on the point of an Island opposite to some of our batteries—the other on the Black Rock where she sunk as low as the water would allow being shot in the hull from one side. The Detroit altho' several fruitless attempts by us to be got off was set on fire by the Americans & blew up. Lieut. Rolette a brave young man who commanded the Detroit after loosing both hands was killed. I have not been able to learn the true account it must have been a bloody time.

(Claus Papers, copy by Miss Catherine Claus.)

Late in the afternoon of October 13 General Van Rensselaer sent over a flag of truce to make enquiries about wounded officers and soldiers and this was followed by a written message proposing to send over surgeons to attend them and proposing an armistice for three days. General Sheaffe suggested in reply that all wounded prisoners should be removed across the river on condition of their not serving again until properly exchanged and agreed to a cessation of firing for three days. In a second letter written next day he proposed a partial exchange of prisoners and that the militia captured at Queenston excluding those who might be exchanged shall be restored to their homes and families under an engagement not to serve against Great Britain or her allies during the war or until regularly exchanged.

Van Rensselaer readily assented to this proposal and sent an officer to make equitable arrangements which were completed on October 15. Next day General Sheaffe proposed an extension of the armistice until the exchange of prisoners could be completed and General Brock buried. His opponent cordially agreed to extend the armistice to October 19 and announced that he had given orders for firing salutes for Brock's funeral at Lewiston and Fort Niagara that afternoon. This correspondence had been conducted on both sides with much politeness. On the same day Van Rensselaer turned over the command of his troops to General Alexander Smyth of the United States army who adopted a different tone in the interchange of letters.

FROM BRIG. GEN. SMYTH TO MAJOR GEN. SHEAFFE

Head Quarters Lewiston 17th Oct. 1812

Sir

A letter addressed by you to Major Gen. V. Rensselaer has been put into my hands wherein you propose to exchange a Lieut. of militia and a private for an Indian savage taken a prisoner by our troops

I regret receiving from you a proposition to which I cannot accede

(Dominion Archives C 688 B p 135)

General Sheaffe lost no time in replying at considerable length

FROM MAJOR GENERAL SHEAFFE TO BRIG GENERAL SMYTH (Draft)

Fort George 17th Oct. 1812

Sir

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your note of this date and regret that I have made a proposition to you that you find it necessary to reject especially as it was made at the particular request of B General Wadsworth As that has failed I presume that the prior agreement respecting the Indian in question which was entered into by Colonel Winder still retains its force and that the Indian will be sent back to-morrow Not yet having heard of the return of the prisoners who were to have been sent over from Buffalo or Black Rock early this morning according to the assurance given by Col Winder and for whom prisoners have already been sent as an exchange I request if they have been intentionally detained that you will be pleased to inform me of the cause

Mr Hamilton who has been some time detained at Buffalo has brothers and other near relations in this vicinity who have heard some accounts of the state of his health by which they are much alarmed I therefore permit one of his brothers to go over with a flag to Buffalo to obtain some information of him and I beg leave to propose that Mr Hamilton shall be allowed to join his friends an officer of a rank that may be deemed equivalent being released from his parole in exchange for him

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B 133 4)

Brig General Wadsworth who was still a prisoner of war then applied for the liberation on their paroles of two officers of the regular army of the United States who had not been included in the original agreement which related only to officers of the militia and Sheaffe readily assented.

FROM BRIG GENERAL WADSWORTH TO MAJOR GENERAL SHEAFFE

Newark Oct 17 1812

Sir

Major J R Mullany and Capt. Peter Ogilvie Jun. have familys and are not in the most pleasant condition to leave

I shall receive it as a great favor if you will permit them to return on parole

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B. p. 136)

The draft of a second letter from Sheaffe to Smyth has been preserved which may refer to this proposal.

17th Oct [1812]

I have the honor of forwarding a note addressed to you which B G W[adsworth] has delivered to me I avail myself of the opportunity to request that I may be informed at what time I may expect the prisoners in your power at Lewiston and Buffalo to be sent over and if anything yet remains to be done on my part to accelerate the execution of the agreement for their exchange

(Dominion Archives C. 688 A p. 192)

Smyth's reply to these letters was framed in a decidedly aggressive spirit

FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL SMYTH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE

Head Quarters of the Army of the Centre,
Camp near Lewiston 18 Oct 1812.

Sir

Your letter dated yesterday I have this moment had the honor to receive

In the agreement respecting the exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder & Major Evans there is nothing said of the Indian Chief But any verbal agreement entered into by Colonel Winder will be fulfilled.

Colo Winder addressed a note to Genl V Rensselaer stating that you estimated the Indian chief as equal to a militia major and requesting instructions

I propose to exchange the indian chief for the 24 men 7 women 6 children taken at Chicago or such of them as were not butchered

The prisoners at Buffalo have not been intentionally detained The transfer of command has prevented the order being given for their release It shall be immediately given.

The conduct of Mr Hamilton particularly in attempting to cross to Canada by night and alone would perhaps justify us in treating him as a spy But willing to proceed in a liberal manner I accept your proposition for his Exchange The delicacy of his situation and the importance of his connexion will justify me in estimating him equal to a captain of regular troops

For the master commandant of the Detroit alias Adams I expect a captain of regulars in exchange I think he ranks so by your regulations For Mr Carr[1] Lt. of Matinra & Mr Molfoy you will please to release Lieutenants Totten & Randolph

I am very sorry that at the moment I am writing this despatch a british prisoner is found exploring the camp, having left his quarters about a mile distant I have placed him in close confinement

As I am averse to taking a single life or occasioning a single calamity without an object I propose a further continuance of the Armistice indefinitely each party having a right to terminate it giving thirty hours notice to the other party the armistice to extend along the frontier from the Lake Erie to Lake Ontario

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 E., pp. 141-143)

A draft of Sheaffe's reply contains several interlineations and erasures, but was sedulously conciliatory

Fort George 18th October 1812.

Sir

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your communication by Captain King Assistant Inspector General.

That there was nothing said of the Indian Chief in the agreement for an exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder and Major Evans was owing to a supposition on the part of the latter that the case was already provided for by a special agreement between Colonel Winder and myself that an Indian was taken prisoner having been mentioned in conversation before those two officers began the discussion of the subject on which they were to treat (and I was so strongly impressed with the idea that the exchange was finally settled that I gave an assurance to his friends that he was to be restored)* With regard to your proposition to exchange the Indian Chief for the men women and children or such of them as (were not butchered)** may survive I infinitely regret Sir that it is not in my power to restore them all without conditions In (the transactions to which you allude)** operations against that place neither the British Govt nor the influence of its officers nor a British force was concerned or probably your present proposition would be needless. I must therefore disclaim (any)* stipulations regarding them but whatever may be in my power towards obtaining the restoration of the survivors to their friends I shall most joyfully do unconnected with the present subject of discussion.

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[1] Ensign Thomas Kerr Royal Newfoundland Regiment, mortally wounded at Frenchtown, River Raisin, 22 January 1813

(I cannot admit it as a principle though Mr Hamilton's conduct during his detention may not have been in some respects justifiable yet I conceive that having been provided with a passport his attempt)** There are (particular)* circumstances perhaps in Mr Hamilton's case that (make me desirous of avoiding discussion)** I am not qualified to discuss and as I am anxious for his returning into the bosom of a family that has suff[ere]d so much on his account I am willing to grant more than perhaps ought to be deemed an equivalent for him

The late commander of the Detroit belonging to the provincial marine ranks with us only as a Lieut of the regular troops Mr Molloy's rank is inferior to that of a Lieut but Sir I am desirous that the opening of a correspondence between us should be marked by a spirit of liberality conformably with which I propose that for

Mr Hamilton
Comm'r Rolette,
Lt Kerr

Mr Molloy and the Indian chief should be returned to you two captains of regular troops the two Lieuts you have named and Lt Smith who took the Indian chief and the Mr Smith already offered with him or a major of militia as originally proposed or if you have any substitute to name I beg that you will make it known to me

As my sentiments perfectly accord with those you express in the opening of your proposal for continuing the

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(*) Omitted (**) Inserted.

armistice I assent to its being prolonged indefinitely each party having a right to terminate it giving 30 hours previous notice

I am extremely sorry to hear that a british prisoner has been so indiscreet as to render himself liable to punishment I hope that he has erred from ignorance and that an enquiry into the case will satisfy you that it was so.

(Dominion Archives, C 688 B pp 137 140)

This letter had an immediate mollifying effect and Smyth replied next day

Head Quarters Camp near Lewiston Oct 19th, 1812

Sir

I have received your letter of yesterday and close with all your propositions

You will be pleased to give liberty to Capt Gibson Capt Machesney Lieutenant Totten Lieutenant Randolph Lieut Smith and Mr Smith

The prisoners at this place you will receive to-day & orders have gone by express for the release of those at Buffalo

(Dominion Archives C 688 B p. 144)

General Sheaffe amended his official account of the battle at Queenston[3] by a short memorandum addressed to the military secretary of Sir George Prevost

Fort George 18th Octr 1812.

Memorandum,

In my despatch of the 13th inst I omitted mentioning my A.D C Ensign Coffin I discovered the omission in reading it and I fear that I did not rectify the error It should have been thus "I found the services of Lieut Fowler 41st Regt &c &c &c and of my A.D C Ensign Coffin[4] very useful" I beg that the correction may be admitted into the despatch

(Dominion Archives C. 677 p 140)

On the day after the battle of Queenston Heights Charles Askin described the action as well as he could from the information he had then received in a letter to his father

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[3] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II pp 71 and 75 and Wood, Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, I, pp. 605-688

[4] Afterwards Colonel Nathaniel Coffin, Adjutant-General of Militia for Upper Canada, 1815-1837, Sheaffe's brother-in-law

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara Wednesday Octr 14th, 1812.

Dear Father

Yesterday I am happy to say a great victory was gained by us over the Americans at Queenston but it is a dear bought victory for our ever to be lamented General was killed. The action commenced about one hour before daylight and continued till three or four o clock in the afternoon. Early in the day the General received a wound and I believe never spoke a word after. When the Americans first came over there were only two companies of the 49th Regt and two or three companies of militia to oppose them. In one of the companies of the 49th Wm Robertson went with Mr Robt Grant as volunteers and distinguished himself very much. The Americans opened a battery on us and we threw over shells and cannonaded them as much as we could but not to much effect for they continued coming over. The militia and 49th being engaged so much were soon much reduced by their killed and wounded. When information was given to the General that the Americans were getting on the mountain he immediately ordered Col McDonnell to collect what men he could find [and] oppose them for at this time the 49th and militia were in different parties. About 40 men were collected. They ran up the mountain and found about two or three hundred of the American regulars there well formed. Wm R[obertson] who was at the head of the 40 men ran forward and hallowed out to the Americans Now we will be at you! But the Americans immediately fired at them and obliged our men to retire down the hill. We had a battery half way up the mountain which was but weakly guarded. The General was there and was obliged to leave it and the Americans took possession of it. It was soon after this that the General got the wound which killed him. The Americans had possession of part of Queenston for some time and kept it as well as the battery and were busy bringing over their men as fast as they could till reinforcements from this place and Chippawa of the 41st militia and Indians formed as I understand on the mountain and attacked them so vigorously that they ran down the mountain as fast as they could and made for the river to get over and some attempted to swim. When the American General on the other side seeing what a perilous situation they were in sent over a flag of truce and they all surrendered prisoners of war. They were all marched down to this place and got here about sun down. They came over to breakfast on this side but I believe it was a day of fasting with them. There are about six hundred men taken and nearly fifty officers. One company of riflemen had made their way into the woods & remained there all night We heard this morning that the Indians were after them and a party of the 41st & militia are sent this morn[in]g to protect them what I must say they hardly deserve Had they not surrendered yesterday they would have all been driven into the river for they fled before our men the grenadiers of the 41st who were anxious to retrieve their character were very anxious to charge them but they ran before them so fast that they never could get up to them and went down what you might almost call precipices to get out of the way of our men What number of our men were lost I cannot say but there are few considering the time they were engaged I think we have lost about sixty men and only one officer which was poor General Brock Col McDonnell is dangerously wounded and several officers of the 49th are wounded but not badly The Americans I think must have lost more than a hundred and I am told several of their officers were killed at least six or seven Among those taken is General Wadsworth Cols Allen Van Ranselaer & Scott and some other Col.

When the Americans were first coming over about 80 who were in a scow were so galled by the fire from a few of the 49th Regt that they begged for quarter and were taken prisoners I saw a great many of the prisoners one half of whom are militia these were anxious to know and were in hopes of being allowed to go home as the militia taken at Detroit [were] but when they were told they would have to go to Quebec they were not very well pleased Had they had an idea of it there are not many of them would have put their foot on this shore I regret much that I could not share in the honor of the victory After my arrival at Queenston I was confined to bed with boils and was two days that I could not get up to my meals nor could I hardly sit up in bed for the worst of the boils and the last broke the day before they came over I was laying at George Hamilton's when we were first attacked and went from that to Robert's as well as I could there I remained about an hour but finding the Americans were gaining ground I thought that as I could not run that I should get out of their way if I could & went to a village about 2½ miles back[1] and from that I came down here to get arms for some men that were there

I have not time to write more & paper is so scarce that I can hardly get a sheet This I had to beg

The two flank companies of the Newfoundland Fencibles are on their way to Amherstburg I think there are nearly two hundred of them

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers, 1812)

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[1] St. Davids.

On the day of General Brock's funeral, Charles Askin wrote a short letter to his father:

Niagara 16th Octr. 1812
Friday 3 o'Clock P.M.

Dear Father,

I wrote you two days ago giving you an account of an action which was fought at Queenston on Tuesday last, in which engagement we were Victorious, but when I wrote you I did not know the great advantage we had gained over the Enemy. we have took on that day nearly eight hundred prisoners sixty five of whom are officers and we killed and drowned I think about two hundred more. we took one of their standards also and a six pounder. it would have been a great Victory had we not lost our Gallant General Brock who was killed when animating the 49th Regt. and desiring them to charge the Enemy who had just then taken our Battery on the Mountain. soon after the General was killed his Aid de Camp Col. McDonnell received a wound of which he died two days after, he was a very promising young man—both him and the poor General were just now interred. the procession was grand. The Indians formed a part of it—

We have had a Cessation of Hostilities for three days by Agreement. It terminates in about an hour—but I hardly think we will be attacked for some days, though they have a very large force on the other side. I am told that many of those who came over were drove into the boats at the Point of the Bayonet. I think that their comrades will be more unwilling to come over now.

My love to my Dear Mother Brothers & Sisters if you please.

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit.)

"Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813," printed at Halifax in 1815 by John Howe Junior,* has become a very rare book. Its dedication to "the People of Canada," is subscribed "An Acadian." It contains the following versified account of the battle at Queenston:

"But soon the veteran band these wilds forsake
And speed their way down bright Erie's lake;
For there another army brav'd the shore,
That in conjunction might have mov'd before.
But these were Generals every one are free
Go where they like not where they ought to be.

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*Probably a brother of Hon. Joseph Howe.

Over Niagara's flood this chose to go
Where he expected but a slender foe
Two moons had fill'd their horns while slow he paus'd
Canada's valiant shot some terror caus'd
They were deceiv'd thinking her baby frame
Would fall with fear—e'en at a Yankee's name
But finding more mature her nerves and strength
Cautious he stood—then on advanced at length
To where the narrows trace the opposing shore
And they could see that nothing stood before
Brock was not there—they were in perfect plight
To land and take the little town that night
Their chief Van Rennselear—a rugged name
In story large and lengthy as his fame.
Why fam'd I hear you say? ay! why indeed,
Except for merit to obtain the meed
Long ere so beautiful a wreath was due
Or else as wreaths are scarce to steal a few
Be as it may—he cross'd at dead of night
When the young moon show'd half her borrow'd light
Before they left the shore a deep blood red
Glow'd o'er her face, with streaks of darkness spread.
Thus pensively she cast a feeble light
O'er a long field with falchions gleaming bright.
There the invaders stood and heard around
On every side the cataract's mighty sound
They paus'd and listen'd, not from any fear
'Twas but the cataract—not drums they hear
And on the General led his phalanx strong
Like midnight murder mov'd he slow along

But as they gain'd the border of the flood
Somewhat refractory his army stood;
All would not cross entreaties threats were vain
Down on the rocks they sat—and there remain
To learn what fortune those advancing found,
And see if victory their efforts crown'd.
Another evil ek'd out their delay
Fifteen longboats with oars, had gone astray!
But thus they remedy then ply the oar
And reach Canada's silent sleeping shore

The watchful sentinel the town alarms!
Quick the responsive drummer beat to arms
Canada's General—like a ray of light
A splendid meteor on the brown of night,
Advanc'd along ere day began to dawn
Or from his lair had sprung the sleeping fawn

Surpris'd the foe beheld him lead his band
And on the margin of the river stand
No power was left to fly—for on the shore
One half were landing—and the rest were o'er
Near where the whirlpool agitates the flood
Frowning with scorn the British heroes stood
And on the foes advance their vollies pour,
Tracking with blood the till then hallow'd shore,
Yet on the invaders came tho' Brock withstood
Their force with bayonets deep dy'd in blood
The treble number'd foe push'd on with zeal
And made Brock's bright and glittering rampart reel
And now conceive—while carnage mark'd the strand,
And drench'd with blood Canadia's hallow'd land
Conceive a patriot breast with ardor fir'd,
His firm strong nerves with energy inspir'd
A Briton panting for his country's fame
Anxious to strengthen her renowned name
Yet here in bondage held in galling chains
A mere spectator of the scene remains
Where hated enemies with pride rejoice
And rage must smother the resentful voice

How in the conflict did his heart rebound
How tremble at the shouts that rang around,
'Till victory to her son the laurel bore
To Brock the hero of Niagara's shore
Who made the fury of the battle's bray
Out roar the cataract's resistless way.
A pause ensued the voice of war was still,
The victor's tramp was silent on the hill
When slow and solemn came the heavy sound
That Brock was struggling with a mortal wound
The field he kept—till all his foes had fled
Then smiling death's cold mantle round him spread
The ground that just before wept blood for tears
Now wet with sorrow's drops forlorn appears,
The Indians laid their warlike belts aside
Their strings of wampum—and their martial pride
Near the pale corse these varied trophies lay
To tell their strength and pride had pass'd away
Silent they stood and gaz'd upon the bier
But heav'd no sigh, nor dropp'd one friendly tear
Renowned Chief—joy rest with thy remains
Virtue's bright current fill'd thy manly veins

Where could more glory dignify his name
Engrave him deeper on the lists of fame

He fell repelling the invaders' might
Restoring to the land his ravish'd right
In honor's cause his noble spirit fled
And her escutcheon glitters o'er his head

Say gallant shade as thy last blood distill'd
In sacred drops and yon rough basin fill'd
Say could thy pillow be more grand and dread?
Or more sublime thy winding sheet be spread?
Than there where nature all her power combines
To grace a canopy where fame reclines
Niagara's shore whose far resounding flood
Tinges its foam with thy respected blood
Whose hurried cataract and wave sublime
Laughs at the figure of dim sighted time
Where Iris weeps—and spreads her polished bow
Bedew'd with tears that to thy memory flow

Brock's mausoleum distant worlds shall tell
And paint Niagara where the hero fell
Time spurning flood—when nations are no more
Then will relate the tragic story o'er
And show that grave beside his on the hill
Where brave Macdonald holds his station still
For as in life—in fortune's hours they sped
So side by side are laid the heroes dead."

'October 1812.' Pp 23 27

A memorial from Major James Dennis prepared by him at the end of the war contains considerable information respecting the battle of Queenston and other operations in which he was engaged not to be found elsewhere

His Honour Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath President Administering the Government of Upper Canada &c &c &c.

The Memorial of Brevet Major James Dennis 49th Regiment Major of Brigade to the Forces Quebec

20th March 1815

SHEWETH

That your Memorialist conceiving that a statement of his services in the Canadas & more particularly in Upper Canada might be deemed deserving Your Honor's consideration as well as that of the Honourable the Council of that Province

Humbly intreats your benevolent interest in his prayer and your recommendation that he may Obtain a grant of Land as a gratuity for the same—

Your Memorialist humbly states that he has served nearly Thirteen Years in both Canadas, between four and five years of which period he served in the upper Province, and nearly Two years and Six Months of the latter period, in a scene of Active and harassing Warfare and at a crisis of the late War, very important to the interests of that Country particularly when its very salvation was menaced by the attempts of the Enemy (which under the Direction of Divine Providence were defeated) on the 13th October, 1812.

That your Memorialist had the honor to Command the Post of Queenston for some weeks before, at the actual period when, and for some time after it was attacked by General Van Rancelar and the Americans, numerically triple in force, by the firmness, Zeal, and intrepidity of a few Royal and Militia Artillery, the Flankers of the 49th Regiment, aided by the Gallantry and Devotion of Captains Hatts, Chisholms & Durands Companies of Militia who rivalled the regulars in good conduct had the good fortune to maintain his position in spite of every effort essayed by an overwhelming force of the Enemy and previous to the arrival of the ever to be regretted Major General Sir Isaac Brock who (on the ground) was pleased to applaud Memorialists arrangement for the Defence and the conduct of the Troops in repelling the attack and Maintaining the Post of Queenston to a few moments before his lamented fate Major General Sir Isaack Brock was unaccompanied on his first arrival having dispatched his Aide de Camps to Hurry on the reinforcements which could be spared from Fort George and who afterwards (combined with those remaining of Mem'lists Command) for Mem'list again succeeded to it after our beloved general fell) and also by the intrepid conduct of the increased Number of Militia with the Indians Achieved in the after part of the day a glorious Victory the firm foundation for which was laid by the panic struck in the Enemy by nearly four hours constant and severe fighting against their superior Numbers from a quarter before four oClock on that memorable morning when the Troops under your Memorialists command destroyed between 300 and 400 of the Enemy took and sunk five large Batteaux and a large scow (called the Wasp of Oswego) and also took 97 Prisoners all before an Individual arrived to their Assistance and Memorialist presumes to be thus minute in detailing the Services of the Troops under his Command on that day that he may do them the Justice they deserve and that recapitulating their Efforts under your

Memorialists direction may be considered as an Humble plea for attention to the Object of his prayer[1]

Memorialist had also the honor of being in the Actions of Newark on the 27th of May and in that of Stoney Creek the 6th June following (1813) in each of which he had a horse shot under him, and Memorialist further had the honor of serving in several skirmishes with the Enemy while holding a command at the Cross roads on the position circumscribing the enemy when in possession of Fort George particularly one Sunday when field officer on duty, he rallied the troops and indians, retiring from the position of the advanced picquet, which a superior force of the American Indians and rifle men had obtained the possession of and with charged bayonets routed the enemy and reoccupied an Advanced position. Memorialist had also the good fortune to repell a Second attack in the Ev'g of the same day, which the enemy made on our Picquets (with the [illegible] Indians & rifle men) for the purpose of enforcing a reconnaissance of our position at the Cross roads Memorialist had the honor to receive Major General Stewart's (then Col Stewart of the 1st Royals) thanks in the presence of Major General De Rottenburgh Major General Vincent and Lt Colonel Harvey Dy Adjutant General for the performance of his duty on that Sunday (Col Stewart then Com'g the Post) Your Memorialist during his services in the Country has commanded at the following Posts at St Johns & Dependencies (lower Canada) York for a short period during the absence of Lt Col Sheaffe Fort Erie 15 months (during peace) Fort George Queenston Chippawa St Davids 20 Mile Creek the latter Command the advance of the Centre Division by order of Major General Vincent, at the recommendation of Lt Col Harvey Dy Adjt General

Memorialist also commanded a corps of observation at Cornwall the Stores at which Post with 12 Batteaux laden with provisions & Stores for Kingston he was fortunate in withdrawing from the plunder of the force under the Command of the American Genl Wilkinson when he descended the St Lawrence in Novr 1813 Memorialist with an Unorganized ill found though high spirited and gallant Militia about 300 in Number took up a position (having destroyed the Bridge) near Hoople Creek in advance of Cornwall and engaged & for an hour and a half kept in check

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[1] A sketch of the battle of Queenston made by Major Dennis was reproduced in Volume VI of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society p. 76 redrawn, it is stated from a vignette on a small map of Upper Canada published by O G Steele, No 206 Main Street, Buffalo N Y., in 1820

(the day before the Battle of Chryslers) the advance Column General Wilkinsons Force thereby (as he has since been informed by American Officers & which a reference to Genl. Wilkinsons dispatch will Confirm) preventing General Wilkinson from sending assistance from his centre Column where he was himself—to reinforce the troops engaged next day with our Army at Chryslers as he was uncertain at which Point assistance Might be More Necessary—Memorialist although having but one Sergt and Private of his Own Regt and whom he was obliged to give up to the security of the Ammunition continued to Shew a fire from the different parts of the bush along the creek and created temporary respect from the enemy by a fallacious display of force that it induced slowness in their advance altho Amounting (at that Creek) to 1500 Infy & 200 dragoons with 3 Field Pieces which placing in position they attempted to dislodge us whenever fire was given and which after discovering the finesse they in course succeeded in it becoming an unwarrantable temerity to continue a contest on such unequal terms and which could only terminate with capture and slaughter of the peasantry of the Country without Effecting any profitable end a Night march of this same body of Militia in a few days after (Combined with the approach of our troops after the Victory won at Chryslers) induced the precipitate departure of the whole American Force from Our territory

Memorialist trusts the faithful display of his services will not induce the reflection that he is wanting in that modesty so commendable in the Military character that it is a fair effort to strengthen the picture for the sole faultless purpose of gaining attention towards his prayer and memorialist trusts it will not diminish his claim to express that the gentlemen and peasantry on the Niagara Frontier as well as those of Glengary & Dundas will bear sufficient testimony to the veracity of the particular services herein stated

Memorialist humbly adds that during his services in upper Canada he was twice wounded once at Queenston and again at Stoney Creek and never was an hour absent from his duties while serving for nearly 13 years in the Canadas

This statement taken into your honours gracious consideration and obtaining your recommendation for the grant of land solicited being bestowed will impress with strong feelings of gratitude Your Memorialist & devoted Obedient

& faithful

Humble Servant

J Dennis[1] B Major 49th Regt

Brigade Major to the Forces.

(Sundries Upper Canada 1815)

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[1] Afterwards Major-General Sir James Dennis, K.C.B.

Expectations of an immediate renewal of hostilities caused an urgent call for reinforcements to the militia on active duty. This was embodied in a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Clark to Charles Askin.

Chippawa Octr 23d 1812

Sir

The company of militia at Canberry & lower Haldimand of which you are captain being attached to the 2nd Lincoln Regiment under my command I have now to order that you immediately march down here every man under your command as quick as possible. On their arrival here they will receive arms and ammunition.

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

A letter from General Sheaffe to the Military Secretary shows that the exchange of officers was productive of some information of considerable importance.

Fort George 25th Oct. 1812.

Sir

I transmit herewith some intelligence recently obtained. That from Lieutenant Rolette is interesting as it relates to the designs of the enemy on our vessels on the lakes and the means for executing them. L. Colonel Myers sends to Colonel MacDonnell Lieutenant Rolette's report of the capture of the Detroit and other information relative to the Marine Department.

(Dominion Archives C. 677 p. 143)

As soon as the death of General Brock became known at York the resident members of the Executive Council were hastily assembled and the clerk was instructed to inform General Sheaffe that in succeeding him in the military command he had also become administrator of the civil affairs of the province. This was done in a letter from Mr John Small in the following terms.

"As soon as intelligence was received of the death of the late President General Brock the Executive Council assembled on the summons of the Chief Justice and I am directed to transmit to you Sir as succeeding to the command of His Majesty's Forces in this Province the enclosed copy of the additional royal instructions of 13th July 1811 and to apprise you that the civil government must remain unprovided until you are sworn a member of the Executive Council."

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B p. 129)

The opportune extension of the armistice enabled Sheaffe to comply with very little delay He announced this fact in a letter to Sir George Prevost dated at Fort George on October 19

After writing my despatch of yesterday I received a proposition from Brigadier Gen'l Smyth commanding on the United States frontier for prolonging the armistice indefinitely either party having a right to terminate it giving thirty hours notice to the other party to which I have acceded as it corresponds with the system adopted on our part and removes the obstacle of my going over to York—the wind has not permitted the departure of the second (and last) division of the Prisoners—but it seems now inclined to be favorable for it and they are embarking in the Moira and Simcoe to proceed for Kingston Lt Colonel Myers reports on the subject to Colonel McDonell[a]

"I am informed that Captain Loring[b] of the 104th Regiment (late Lt of the 49th) has arrived at Montreal I shall feel much obliged to Your Excellency to permit his joining me as he came out with the expectation of being appointed my Aide de Camp If my request cannot be granted I beg leave to recommend him to Your Excellency as well qualified for the staff appointment suitable to his rank should there be a vacancy

"I this moment learn that the Prince Regent is coming in—I shall embark in her without delay and proceed to York and as I intend sending this despatch from thence by land I shall close it there

(Sheaffe's Letter Book)

Sheaffe wrote again to Prevost next day from York

"I arrived here last night and found the Moira and Simcoe here the wind having forced them to put in

"The Executive Council assembled to day and I was sworn in as a Member of it and afterwards as President which I have communicated to Earl Bathurst in a despatch that accompanies[c]

"The Vessel that was supposed to be the P[rince] R[egent] proved to be the Royal George in which I came over That ship has taken on board the Prisoners that had been sent to this place and with the Moira and Simcoe has just sailed for Kingston The P[rince] R[egent] arrived here this evening and I shall return to Fort George in that vessel to-morrow."

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[a] Colonel Edward Macdonell Quartermaster-General

[b] Captain Robert Roberts Loring who afterwards became A.D.C to Sir Gordon Drummond and was taken prisoner at Lundy's Lane.

[c] Printed in "The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812 Part II, pp. 142 143

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

Early in November 1812 by the advice of the Executive Council a board of magistrates was appointed by the President to examine persons claiming exemption from military service as citizens of the United States and consequently liable to deportation as alien enemies consisting of the Honourable William Claus Thomas Dickson and Joseph Edwards to whom the following instructions were issued

"Instructions from His Honor to the Board appointed at Niagara for the examination of persons residing in the Niagara London and Western Districts who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States

"Having thought proper in conformity with the advice of the Executive Council to constitute you or any two of you to be a Board at Niagara to receive and decide upon the pretensions of persons in the Niagara London and Western Districts who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States you will therefore receive all such applications and being satisfied that the persons applying are subjects of the United States you will furnish them with passports to cross the lines at such place and in such manner as you may find expedient to direct. Should however instances occur in which it may appear to you that very serious injury may arise to such persons being settled and having families in the country who have not received lands from the Crown or taken the oath of allegiance you may report the same to me especially with your opinion as to the terms of a modified allegiance or security for good conduct on which they may be permitted to remain.

"Roger Hale Sheaffe President."

A form of passport was appended

"The bearer of this (person's name at full length) late resident in (name of District &c) having reported himself to us as a subject of the United States and we being satisfied that he is so do hereby grant him this passport that he may be passed over to from and quit this Province on or before the day of

"Given under our hands at this day of

"N B A description of the person to whom the passport is given to be inserted at the foot or on the back thereof The passport to be returned to the Board after it has been employed for the purpose for which it was granted."

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B, pp 155-6)

A letter from Alexander Hamilton afterwards Sheriff of the Niagara district for many years to Charles Askin contains a sarcastic reference to the short lived newspaper published at Niagara after the demise of the "Guardian.

10 Nov 1812.

Dear Charles,

Your note by Matthew Crooks came to hand yesterday morning but owing to my con[founde]d memory I did not send it with him I now enclose you a Bee of the 31st Oct which is the last we have that of last week partaking too deeply of the cup got drunk and died I also send you a ten dollar association note[a] Should you want more I can supply you very well being at present pretty flush The Moira Simcoe and Murney's sloop came in the other day loaded with clothes for the militia[b] and goods for individuals There is nothing new by them It is said they were to be sent back immediately to Kingston for 2 more companies of the 49th and 1 of the Newfoundland company which would be a great addition to our strength They are so dilatory that the country might be taken & retaken two or three times before they would get back again

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

The armistice was terminated by a letter from General Smyth at Buffalo stating that it would end at one o'clock in the evening of November 20 This notice was given to the commandant at Fort Erie in the forenoon of November 19 instead of being sent to General Sheaffe at Fort George yet it was delivered to him at half past eight that evening Next day Alexander Hamilton wrote to Charles Askin at Chippawa,

Nia[gara] 20 Nov 1812

My dear Charles

Yours of this morning by Mr Nelles has this moment come to hand Respecting the notice given us of the termination of the armistice it is certainly the case tho I wonder you don't know it as it came from Fort Erie. Col Clark does not seem to know it either which seems rather strange. We understand we are to open every battery upon them at this place the moment the truce is over. The whole country is in requisition at present drawing charcoal for to heat the shot. The plan is said to be to open every gun shells mortars carcasses &c. &c. and continue the business until we get their fort in a blaze which if it should succeed which will be the means of throwing all their works which are fire-proof open to our view. Hamilton Merritt leaves this for Detroit with despatches and money for that place. I have just called at De Karr's for your salts but he has none and does not think there are any in town. Hacoe's and Baldwin's are the only shops now open. I enclose you two ten dollar notes. As I do not just now want them, they may be as well with you as me. I am happy to hear that the boards &c are mostly down and would be still happier to hear they were well sold. Everybody here are now busy sending off their furniture &c as it is generally believed we shall have it very hot and probably all a flame. I will endeavor to find some salts for you and salve before Mr Nailas returns. Adieu perhaps forever in this world.

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[a] Probably issued by the Niagara and Queenston Association of Merchants formed to support the credit of the provincial government

[b] Purchased at Montreal by Lieut. Colonel Nichol, Quartermaster General of Militia. Cf Sheaffe to Prevost, 8 Novr., 1812, in Documentary History Vol. IV, p 186

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

Later in the day Charles Askin wrote in much the same mood:

Chippawa Nov 20th, 1812

Dear Father

We have notice from the other side that the armistice terminates at 9 o'clock to-night. We doubted it at first but now there is no doubt of it and we expect an attack before to morrow morning. I have given Elizabeth Meredith's miniature and some other things (that came from Archange) to Mrs. Macklem of this place to take care of. They are sealed and addressed to you. There is also some papers addressed in the same manner. I send up in a waggon a keg of snuff for my dear mother which she will give part of to my poor uncle & aunt Bartha. I shall also send up a few yds of bombazet for my aunt and a keg of butter for my mother, which I hope will get to Fort Erie in time to go up in the Lady Prevost. As we are all preparing to meet the enemy I have not time to say more. Please to give my kind love to my dear mother to James to Alexr my sisters and all my relations & friends.

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

With this letter went another longer one begun two days earlier but completed the same day.

Chippawa 18th Nov 1812

Dear Father—

Three days ago I wrote to you but did not find an opportunity until to day that I saw Capt Hall of sending the letter the Lady Prevost now laying at Fort Erie will as I from that with the first fair wind I will endeavor to send up 10 lbs. Tea which a man has gone to Queenston for to day that it may be up in time for the Vessel the snuff and Keg of butter if in my power shall go at the same time—but as I have been disappointed in get[t]ing the butter which I long since spoke for I may perhaps not be able to send up the Keg for being stationed here with my company of Militia I cannot leave this to go where I could get it I am also prevented from sending something to my Uncle Barthe for I cannot get such things as I would wish to send him here for being in daily expectation of an attack the Merchants have packed up most of their goods

On Friday last an attempt was made by the Americans to take the Royal George then laying at the Ducks near Kingston alone the Oneida a Vessel of equal force and four others were employed for this purpose but fortunately for us they failed in the attempt we lost one man killed and three wounded the Royal George cut her Cable and made for Kingston The Simcoe was there on her way down and was chased but luckily got safe into Kingston The Earl Moira was also on her way down but not in company with the Simcoe nothing has been heard of her but as she left York the day after the Simcoe she had not time to have got to Kingston when the express left The American Vessels are better manned I believe than ours on Lake Ontario and I am afraid unless some British Tars are sent for the enemy will make themselves masters of it I was told that Capt Hall had made application to go for seamen to Quebec but was refused. One of the inhabitants of this District who has been ever since the war on the other side made his escape a few days ago and came over near Queenston in a Boat he says the Militia have left the lines but that the enemy have about seven thousand regulars between Niagara & Buffalo. I do not think they have so many and if they have we have six thousand to oppose them and their regulars are not near so well disciplined as our flankers Clothing has lately come for the Militia the Flank Companies get 1 pr pantaloons each 1 pr shoes or two pr Shoe packs & 1 Jacket Shirts and stockings are provided for them For 3 yds of flannel and thread to make it they have to pay 5/6 N Y C. and the stockings which are very good cost them 4/4 a pr Yk every militiaman is to have a blanket but they are to be returned.

James Hamilton who is stationed with Robert about one mile from this sent down to Queenston to day for Elizabeth Meredith's miniature picture which he brought out with him and left in his trunk there I shall try and send it up to you by Ensign Kerr who appears to be a very careful young man and who has promised to take charge of it

I have lately seen General Hull's official Dispatch to his Government respecting the surrender of Detroit it is well wrote and more correct than I should have expected it although I dare say Mr Brush will swear there is not a word of truth in it when he sees it I see in the same paper that Col Miller who was taken at Detroit is exchanged for Capt Dacres of the Guerriere I am very sorry I have not been able to get the paper to send it to you I have wrote to Alex. Hamilton to send me from Niagara any papers he can get and expect some from him to morrow which you shall have if they come I will beg some from Mr Clark for you also. I gave you all the news in the letter I wrote you three days ago as I mean this shall go by land and may perhaps come to hand first I shall just mention the most interesting things Lord Wellington in several engagements with the French had allways been victorious and had destroyed the whole of Marmont's Army Marmont himself had lost his Arm and afterwards died the French lost immense numbers Lord Wellington in one of the battles had got a slight wound with a Sabre He entered Madrid I think some time in August Joseph Bonaparte had made his escape but had not got out of Spain we have had reports of his being since taken with the last of his followers about 7000 men but this I hardly believe yet know that as we were masters of the North of Spain he stands a poor chance of getting clear The French have been beat also in some encounters with the Russians and have lost three or four thousand men this is all I now recollect except that it's said that Sir John Borlase Warren is sent out as Ambassador and is now at Washington we shall soon know if he is or not

Nov 20. Yesterday we had information here that the Armistice would terminate at 9 o'clock to-night but we are not certain of it I send now to Fort Erie 7½ half yds Bombazet done up in a small bundle covered with Sheeting and addressed to you this I will thank you to give to my Aunt Barthe with my love

Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters & respects to my Uncle Barth

(Burton Historical Collection Askin Papers)

When the privations and sufferings of the militia stationed on the Niagara became known at York the sympathy of the inhabitants was aroused and a meeting was called which resulted in the formation of the "Loyal and Patriotic Society" soon after for their aid and relief The Reverend John Strachan who took a leading part in its organization wrote immediately on the subject to his former pupil John Beverley Robinson who was still on duty with his flank company of the Third York regiment

Nov 22 1812

My dear John,

In consequence of a hint in the letters of Mr G Ridout and Mr Robert Stanton to their respective fathers the gentlemen of York met to-day in the church for the purpose of subscribing towards the comforts of the militia belonging to this district on actual service especially the flank companies.

Our subscription though not yet paid amounts to £150 and we wish your and Captain Heward's advice how to dispose of it for the most advantage of the men Your brother Captain [Peter] Robinson thinks that the captains of the York militia should make a requisition upon the Quartermaster General for flannel sufficient to make two shirts for every man that wants them and thread &c. to make them up together with a pair of stockings for each and we will supply the captains with the amount. If there is any difficulty in making them up we can get it done here instantly The militia will be much pleased when they know with what alacrity the subscription proceeded.

To Lieut John B Robinson Brown's Point by Niagara.

The appearance of a dominating hostile squadron of ships on Lake Ontario in November caused serious alarm An emergency meeting of the Executive Council was held to discuss the situation It was clearly seen that the safety of the seat of government as well as the Niagara Peninsula and the western part of the Province was dependent upon the maintenance of naval superiority on that lake An address to General Sheaffe on the subject was adopted unanimously and signed by the Chief Justice as chairman

"We trust that Your Honour will believe that the following observations proceed from the purest motives which we as a Committee of the Executive Council do now submit to your consideration

"We rejoice with our fellow subjects at the success which has hitherto attended His Majesty's arms but while reflecting with pleasure on the past we cannot conceal our anxiety for the future.

"By land our success has exceeded our hopes not so is our welfare on the lakes Whether this is to be attributed to inferiority of strength on our part to accident which the wisest and bravest can neither foresee nor prevent or to the inexperience of our naval commanders we presume not even to hint at an opinion.

"But altho our hopes have in some instances been disappointed nothing has as yet taken place to lead us to despair much to excite our active exertions If faith is to be given to report and that not slightly founded our enemies are using every effort to strengthen their marine on the lakes At this moment it is said they are building a vessel superior in force to any that has yet appeared on Lake Ontario The consequences that will necessarily follow from the command of the lakes being in the power of the United States would be distressing in the extreme to this province

"We speak from the strongest conviction we believe it would be fatal.

"But it is the farthest from our thoughts officiously to interfere with such measures as may be deemed expedient by those entrusted with command. We only as subjects and as men who have everything that is valuable and dear to them at stake offer our feeble aid by stating with the greatest deference and respect to Your Honour as President of that Board to which we belong our unanimous and solemn opinion that to strengthen our marine on the lakes is absolutely necessary under existing circumstances for the defence and preservation of this Province."

"Novr 17th 1812 Thomas Scott Chairman"

(Dominion Archives, C. 728, pp. 113-4)

This address was sent at once to General Sheaffe who replied a week later from his headquarters at Fort George, where his attention was engaged by the recent resumption of active hostilities

"Your address is before me. The subject of it is of vital importance to this Province. It has therefore an imperious claim to the attention of those who are guardians of the public welfare. As such in making this representation you have performed one of the most essential duties which your public character imposed on you.

"The state of our Provincial Marine and the necessity for its improvement and augmentation are known to his Excellency the Commander of the Forces and have been the subject of communication to His Majesty's Ministers to whom it has been recommended to employ officers and seamen of the Royal Navy on the lakes and as it has become evident that immediate exertions are necessary without waiting for distant aid, I have no doubt that every effort will be made without delay to bring forward the resources which the British Provinces can furnish for counteracting the exertions and designs of the enemy in aid of which I am endeavoring to collect information from every part of this Province of persons who can be procured to assist in building or navigating vessels and of the materials and stores that can be furnished for their construction and equipment

"You truly observe Gentlemen that nothing has yet taken place to lead us to despair. We have hitherto waged a successful war and with means that might have been justly deemed inadequate to the task which they accomplished. Providence has been on our side. Let us look with humble confidence to its continued aid. I transmit to His Excellency the Governor in Chief a copy of your address."[1]

(Dominion Archives Sundries Upper Canada 1812)

Sir George Prevost had already given the subject serious attention as Sheaffe knew, but his means were limited and he was dependent mainly on assistance from distant sources.

On the first day of January, 1813 he replied from Quebec in as satisfying terms as he felt justified in employing to Sheaffe's appeal

"I have received your letter of the 16th of last month containing a report of Captain Grey's arrival at Fort George and Lieutenant Colonel Myers being detained there by indisposition.[3] My despatches to you of the 23rd November and of the 15th and 19th December will have made you acquainted with the resources I have been enabled to draw from Lower Canada for aiding in the execution of the plan which is proposed for the improvement of the Marine establishment in Upper Canada to such an extent as shall at least raise it to an equality with the enemy. By a reference to them you will perceive that I was duly sensible that assistance of an essential kind was to be drawn only from a source over which I am without control, and in consequence early application was made from me to the Government and the Admiral in command of the ships on the American station. I have every reason to believe our wants will be attended to from both quarters and with a promptitude calculated to add vigor to the exertions we are making for the preservation of the Province entrusted to your immediate defence. I agree with you in opinion that the construction of gunboats must become a secondary consideration. The general sketch of the plan proposed to be submitted to me by Lieutenant Colonel Myers respecting the increased establishment of the navy did not accompany the letter in which it is mentioned, but as you are armed with such full authority on that subject I trust nothing impedes its progress. The arrival of Mr Plucknett[4] with one hundred and twenty ship carpenters and thirty seamen at Kingston, the departure under proper escorts of one hundred sledges laden with marine and ordnance stores from Montreal for Upper Canada, the assurance of receiving marine supplies from Halifax as early in the year as possible together with a proportion of naval officers and seamen, all these circumstances will convince the gentlemen of your Executive Council that I am duly impressed with the necessity of strengthening our naval force on the lakes, and at the same time as they are made acquainted by you with the measures in operation for their support, you may assure your Council that I will fail in nothing that is within my ability for seconding their loyal and gallant disposition to defend and preserve entire the valuable province of Upper Canada.

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[1] See his letter to Sir George Prevost, 23rd Novr., 1812, in Documentary History 1812, Part II, pp. 229-230.

"Mr Freer[5] will have made known to you the preparations which are making for the comfortable clothing of your militia. I regret that the total want of scarlet cloth has compelled me to consent to green being made use of for the purpose When the militia are clothed and paid the laws under which they were incorporated seem to me sufficient to enable you to establish for their government a system of discipline which may render that force very efficient against an American army

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[3] Myers and Gray were the officers of the Quartermaster General's Department who were then employed in superintending the construction of ships of war on Lakes Erie and Ontario.

[4] Thomas J. Plucknett, appointed storekeeper and superintendent of the dockyard at Kingston.

[5] His military secretary.

I shall be glad to hear the result of your enquiry respecting Captain King[1] but without some decisive proof shall be brought against him to establish his being a British subject you will of course release him agreeably to the convention entered into between General Dearborn and myself for an exchange of prisoners a copy of which I have directed Mr Freer to furnish to you

Since writing the above I have seen General Smyth's official account of the late attempt to invade Upper Canada[2] and Mr Porter's comments upon it[3] From my perusal of them my apprehensions for the safety of the province are considerably diminished. Such a force cannot be considered as formidable and the force opposed to you as well as the officers commanding it are by their own confession of such a description as cannot but inspire you with the fullest confidence as to the result of any future attempt they may make against you

"Mr Dickson[4] whose influence among the Western Indians is very extensive has lately made a proposal to me for a co-operation with them for the defence of Upper Canada I have submitted the same to a board at Montreal of whom Major General de Rottenburg is the head and I have reason to think I shall despatch Mr Dickson to you for the purpose of accomplishing this object"

(Dominion Archives C. 1220 pp. 82 84)

Freer's letter to Sheaffe dated at Quebec next day read

"I avail myself of the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres for Upper Canada to enclose to you an extract of a letter which has been written by His Excellency's orders to the Commissary General authorizing certain supplies to be provided for the militia of Upper Canada and it will be satisfactory for you to be informed that measures have been adopted for complying with that requisition and there is reas

on to believe that the several articles will be in readiness to be forwarded to you at the period stated, at the opening of navigation in the spring.

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[1] Captain William King of the United States army taken prisoner at Frenchman's Creek

[2] See Documentary History 1812 Part II pp 287-291

[3] Ibid pp. 303-309

[4] Robert Dickson the noted trader among the Indians of the Northwest a brother of William Dickson of Niagara and Thomas Dickson of Queenston.

"The clothing which has been approved of by His Excellency for the militia of Upper Canada consists of green jackets red cuff and collar and whitelows blue gunmouth trowsers and felt regulation cap."

(Dominion Archives C 1220, pp. 84-85.)

The resumption of hostilities had demonstrated the imprudence of permitting the departure of enemy aliens who might give useful information and Captain Loring addressed a letter on the subject to Colonel Claus and the other commissioners appointed for their examination.

"Gentlemen

"I am directed by His Honor Major General Sheaffe to communicate to you his wish for your assembling on some early day for the purpose for which you have been appointed, But as circumstances have so much changed since the date of the Proclamation under which you have been instructed to act, that the public safety may be endangered by granting Passports to the extent which was then contemplated, His Honor desires that you will report for his consideration, the cases of all claimants of Passports and that you will suspend the granting any until he shall have decided thereon."

When cold weather set in desertion to their homes by the militia on the frontier increased to an alarming extent and active measures were taken to bring them back Captain Charles Askin addressed the following order to his Lieutenant, Christian McDonnell who was then apparently on leave at his own home in Haldimand.

"On the receipt of this you will immediately go with Wm Kerr & Alex. Lymburner and with them take every deserter from my company in your neighborhood. David Merritt's pass will be out when you receive this and Minor Chambers's also. You will get them to assist if necessary, if not you must tell them to return immediately. You will inquire if Kerr's family are sick or not He and Lymburner can bring three or even more prisoners You will hasten down here for you are wanted very much I shall expect you on Monday next You will pass through Canborough on your way to this and assist Mr Canby in taking and having some deserters now at that place sent down.

"Near Chippewa Decr 4th 1812"

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

General Sheaffe described the situation as he appreciated it, in a letter to Sir George Prevost, dated at Fort George on December 9.

"I have to apologise to Your Excellency for the omission of intelligence from Colonel Procter, when I dispatched my letter of the 4th inst.[4] to which it was referred to. I now have the honor of transmitting it. Appearances on the other side agree with the accounts we have lately received. There are few men to be seen. The weather is cold for the season, but as yet there is but little snow.

"The desertion of our Militia has increased since the beginning of this month, but I expect the voluntary return of many. I hope that the rigor of the season and the state of the River will soon permit my authorising at least for a time the absence of a large portion of the Militia. When a bridge of ice shall be formed between us and the enemy, it will require all the force we can muster to afford a chance of maintaining our position, and indeed the whole will probably be inadequate to the task of preventing occasional predatory incursions. Some days ago a twenty four pounder (from Detroit) that had been remounted on one of the Batteries opposite to Black Rock burst, but fortunately did no other mischief than wounding Capt'n Kerby slightly in the hand. The Gun has been replaced by an 18 pounder. A vessel having the appearance of one of the Enemy's gun boats was seen yesterday morning about 10 or 12 miles to the Eastward near the American shore. A bitter north west wind was blowing last night and still continues. She has probably run back to Sacket's Harbour.

"The weather has not permitted a communication by water with York since the 21st of November, and it is now deemed prudent to lay up the Prince Regent there. Colonel Vincent has adopted the same opinion respecting the Royal George and Moire at Kingston, that it would be attended with too much hazard to allow them to sail; he therefore proposes laying them up there, in which he does not foresee any disadvantage. There will at least be some inconvenience in their being separated from the naval depot, and they run more risk from the Enemy at Kingston. I shall impress on Colonel Vincent the necessity for taking every precaution for their security."

(Sheaffe's Letter Book)

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[4] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II, p. 276.

Charles Askin continued to write to his father at intervals giving him fairly full information of recent events

Mountain Near Queenston Dec 11th 1812

Dear Father

Your affectionate favour of the 28th Ulto. came to hand the night before last I am surprised to find by it that very few of the letters I have wrote you since I have been down here have reached you the one giving an account of the Battle of Queenston went up in the Lady Prevost with some others and some newspapers and I fancy you must have got them before this John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and newspapers and I fancy you must have got them before this John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and distinguished themselves William particularly who behaved as gallantly as any one engaged that day Robt Hamilton & Alexr were in it also but only in the afternoon and Alex. could not take an active part in it for he could not ride nor hardly walk on account of boile therefore remained or went with Capt Holcroft who was cannonading the enemy when crossing the River I had been laying confined to my bed three days before the action with boile and so ill with them that part of the time I could not even Sit up in bed to eat my Victuals I was at George Hamiltons when the attack was made and had to get off as well as I could I remained a short time in Queenston but finding the enemy were getting the better of us I went away to avoid being taken pr Courir an account of the battle is in one of the newspapers I sent you therefore shall defer saying anything more about it at present Soon after an armistice was concluded which did not terminate until the 19th Ult Our Batteries at Fort George the day after its termination opened on Fort Niagara and a cannonade was kept up all day some houses were burnt on the other side & about as many at Navy Hall we lost two men Capt Fry a half pay Officer and a Soldier of the 49th Regt and I believe the enemy lost but few Some shots were fired from Queenston over to Lewiston but not returned from that day we were quiet enough except now and then a false alarm until the 28th Ult when 500 of the Enemy came over from Black Rock and landed near the Ferry below Fort Erie about 1 o'Clock in the morning most of them unobserved they fired on our men at the Batteries who had only time to spike the Cannon and make their escape after defending themselves but resistance was useless against such a force some of the Regular Artillery were killed and some wounded Mr King was severely wounded and taken prisoner and is since dead about 40 of the 49th Regt and some Militia attacked the Enemy and drove them once or twice but at last met with a party from Fort Erie who were coming to our support but not knowing in the dark friends from foes they fired on each other Mr Lamont of the 49th Regt was badly wounded with three balls he commanded a small party of his Regt but the Americans were among them and were supposed to be Indians for they all wore blanket coats and looked so much like them in the day time that I am not surprised our men were deceived by them at night The light company of the 41st Regt who were stationed on the river below the place of attack met the enemy when marching up to aid the 49th they did not know they were the Americans until the word of command was given make ready take aim the Officer commanding the 41st then attacked them (they were the advance guard of the Enemy) and he drove them back on their main body The 41st then Retired until day light for it was impossible to know your friends from your foes At daybreak the Enemy had all retreated and crossed the River except Capt King Aid de Camp to General Smith & 35 men who were taken prisoners a party of Sailors composed part of the force who came over, these Scoundrels set fire to some houses of Mr Douglass & Mr Hardison's which were burnt to the ground these fellows had to make a precipitate retreat some were killed and others taken prisoners. We lost nearly eighty men killed wounded & those taken prisoners the prisoners have since been exchanged the 49th & the long Point Militia suffered most After day light the Enemy made an attempt with seventeen boats to come over we had then about eight hundred men ready to receive them and when the boats came within musket shot we poured such a brisk fire among them that the foremost boats cried out for Quarter but as it was impossible to stop the Militia from firing on them they all turned back A three pounder was playing on them all the time and giving them plenty of Grape or Cannister shot. What number the Americans lost in this attempt to cross is not known but the boats were full when they were coming to this side and only five, six, or seven were seen to get out of most of them when they reached the other shore. In this and the Affair during the night the Enemy may have lost about two hundred men. After their failure a large force was seen to collect and upwards of fifty boats scows &c were filled with men horses and artillery all ready to come over (the enemy it has since been ascertained were then 7000 strong) General Smith then summoned the Garrison at

Fort Erie to surrender but an answer was sent him to say that we would not think of surrendering the place as we could repel any force he could bring against it and we only had then about fifteen hundred men at the place and hardly a Cannon to fire at them which the Enemy knew and they had at least 16 field pieces and those very fine ones. Immediately after he got the Answer instead of coming over he disembarked all his troops. Its said that part of his Army were so disgusted with him that they endeavored to kill him and three shots were fired at him, one thing seems certain that he had to fly from his Army this we have from our prisoners who have returned from there an inhabitant of the Head of the Lake who made his escape from that side from Capt Fitzgerald who was over with a flag of truce and saw two thousand of his Army paraded for him and that hundreds were returning home. All the Militia Volunteers are gone and the Army of the Centre as General Smith is pleased to call it was reduced by desertion & death from seven thousand to three thous[an]d. I Saw one of this cowardly General's Proclamations lately, he has the impudence to call Upper Canada part of the United States. Its a good deal like Hull's but not quite so barbarous. This General Smith was to do so much when he came that he allmost alarmed us but he proves to be even worse than Hull. We have been quite on the alert since the business at Fort Erie and as the desertions and sickness has been very common among the Militia our force is much reduced and the duty has become very hard both on the officers and men who remain. We have lost a number of Militia Men by the Pleurisy they are taken very suddenly and very violently ill and often die in eight or nine days. Numbers of women in the Country have died also lately and what is strange you hardly hear of a Regular soldier being sick but they are used to fatigue and are well clad which is not the case with all the Militia, but clothing is now given to the flank Companies some articles for nothing & some at a very low rate. We have a most Gallant Young Officer here Col. Bishopp who commanded at Fort Erie the day General Smith pretended to come over. He does everything he can to make the Militia comfortable, and does not mind a little expense he has already ingratiated himself in their favor and he is as much liked by them I believe as General Brock was. We are in great hopes of soon having a peace everything seems nearly settled between Sir John B Warren & Mr Monroe. I think the Oxen had better be sold to Mr Bensh at the price you mention for I should not know what to do with them here.

"Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters

"I am your dutiful & Affectionate son

Charles Askin

John Askin Esq
near Sandwich

"Please thank Alex for me for the sword he was so kind as to send me. I sent up a few things this fall which I hope you will receive by the Lady Prevost.

"P S I have been stationed with my Company at & near Chippawa I am now on leave of absence for a few days & am spending them here with John Robertson & to morrow I must return to my Duty John Robertson desires his best regards to you."

(Burton Historical Library Askin Papers)

In a letter to Hon Paul Hamilton Secretary of the Navy Commodore Chauncey described the success of his efforts in delaying or preventing the transportation of reinforcements and supplies from Kingston to Niagara which had caused so much privation to the troops defending that frontier

"Sackets Harbor 9 Dec 1812

"Confidential

"Sir

"On the 8th inst I sent a flag of truce over to Kingston with Mr Murney late owner of the sloop Elizabeth My real motive in sending this flag over was to gain information of the strength at that place which consists of about 600 of the 49th regiment and nearly 1000 militia They also can call in 2000 militia in 24 hours notice That part of the Glengary regiment (say about 500) which was at Kingston at the time I made the attack upon the Royal George finding that they could not get up the Lake by water have marched to York by land The Royal George Earl Moira and a schooner all loaded with military stores and clothing for the Army & Indians at Fort George have made four attempts to escape from Kingston since the 20th of November but upon seeing our blockading squadron have run back They have now relinquished all hope of getting up this winter and have in consequence discharged the stores &c and laid up their vessels I therefore hope to have the pleasure of conducting them into Sackets Harbor before they get another chance to get up the Lake It is also a satisfaction to know that we have prevented the Enemy from sending to Fort George and the posts on that part of the Lake the clothing and arms that his troops may require this winter. Mr. Vaughan[1] could not learn that the enemy contemplated an attack upon this place this winter, on the contrary they appeared to apprehend one from us.

"The information contained in this letter was obtained from an officer on board the Royal George who Mr. Vaughan had known for several years and who is friendly disposed towards us; it therefore may be depended upon. We shall be prepared here at all events to give them a warm reception if they should make any attempt upon us this winter."

(Captains' Letters, Navy Department MSS., Washington)

The apparent discomfort and discontent of the militia determined General Sheaffe to relieve a considerable portion of them from active duty by relays. This was announced in a letter from Lieut. Colonel Cecil Bisshopp to Lieut. Colonel Clark.

"Fort Erie, Dec'r 13th 1812.

"It is Major General Sheaffe's desire that all the militia be sent home. One of the flank companies of the 1st, 2d, 3d & 4th Lincoln Regiments be permitted to return home for the space of a fortnight, then to return to relieve the remaining companies of each of those corps.

"One of the flank companies of the Norfolk and York Regts. will likewise be allowed to go home but as these are at a greater distance from home than the others they will not be expected to return till three weeks have elapsed from the day of the departure of each company from its quarters. An alarm post for every company is to be established at a point most convenient to assemble at for returning to their quarters.

"A gun is intended to be placed on the hill near the entrance of Lundy's Lane to give the alarm if necessary by three discharges at intervals of five minutes.

"Particular care is to be taken of the arms and ammunition which the men are to take with them and be responsible for under the superintendence of their captains, who with their subalterns are to inspect them once a week by squads, one for each officer, either at the men's houses or assembled at some central convenient spot for the men composing it. The barrack or other articles that may have been issued for stationary use to the companies going home are to be delivered in at the nearest post to the proper persons for receiving them whose receipts are to be taken for them in duplicate one of which is to be transmitted to Lt Col. Nichol Q M General.

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[1] William Vaughan, a local sailing master; see **Lossing's** Fieldbook of the War of 1812, p. 368.

"This arrangement is to be carried into effect as quietly as possible to avoid the observation of the enemy

"Private instructions to the foregoing effect are to be given to the commanders of corps & companies and means are to be taken for carrying them into effect immediately unless there be any obstacle of sufficient importance to justify their being suspended

I have the honor to be Sir
Your ob't serv t
Cecil Bisshopp
Lt Col Inspt Fd. Officer

"Lt Col Clark
"Comdg 2nd Lin Militia.

On the other side is the list of the Flank Companies that will go home till the 28th Inst then to return and relieve the others of their respective Regts.

Likewise the companies of the 2nd York and Norfolk that are to remain till the 4th of Jany

Capt Nelles's company will march to Ft Erie as well as Capt Applegarth's to-morrow morning

"To go home till 28th inst	To remain till 28th inst
"2nd Lin Capt Hamilton	Capt Rowe
3d Lin Capt Warren	Major Warren
"4th Lin Capt W Crooks	Capt Nelles
"5th Lin Capt Hatt	Capt Durand
"1st do Capt. Js Crooks	Capt McEwen
"Till 4th Jany	Till 4th Jany
"2nd York Capt Chisholm	Capt Applegarth
"1st Norfolk Capt Bostwick	Capt McCall
"2nd do Capt White	Capt Rapalgee

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

Next day Charles Askin wrote another long letter giving further information of recent events

Dear Father "Near Queenston December 14th 1812

"Your affectionate favor of the 26th Ulto I had the pleasure of receiving a few days ago and partly answered, but could not go to Niagara therefore missed an opportunity of sending you an answer by the return of the Mail I luckily met with one of Lord Selkirk's men from Baldoon who is kind enough to take charge of this and says he will leave it at Dolson's for you as also of another letter I gave him to day which I wrote you two days ago in which I have given you an account of an affair which took place on the 28th Ulto at Fort Erie in which we suffered severely but our Enemy much more and the business terminated much to our honour and in such a manner as to convince the American Nation that Canada is not to be conquered in such an easy manner as they imagined. General Smith sent a Summons to the Com'g Officer at Fort Erie on that day to surrender that Garrison and its Dependencies. he then had seven thousand men under his Command at Black Rock and Buffaloe and we had but fifteen hundred at Fort Erie to oppose him part of them Indians and part Militia but an answer was sent him by Col Bishopp (a very Gallant Young Officer just from Spain) that he could not think of doing it as he had sufficient force to repel any force he could bring over. Gen Smith then had a part of his Army embarked in sixty boats scows &c ready to come over and we were ill prepared to receive him which he knew very well for most of our Cannon had been spiked by a party of his men or our own that morning when the party from the other side came and surprised our men in the Batteries but Gen Smith had not courage enough notwithstanding all these advantages to attempt to come over and immediately on receiving the Answer to his Summons disembarked his troops. Some of his men Yanky like wanted to know from him what he meant by his Maneuver but he would not condescend to tell them & this gave them such Offence that three or four shot [illegible] were fired at him and he made his escape. One thing is certain that he is gone but (as great a Coward as I think him) I hardly think he has left the Army in the shameful manner he is said to have done. He is one of the most Violent Generals I think that has been opposed to us this War. If poor Hull is hung for Cowardice I think there is not many of their Generals but should share the same fate. General Van Ranselair I think was a good Officer but he was too liberal and too much of a Gentleman to please his Country. he was obliged to give up the Command and General Smith superseded him.

I am sorry to say the Naval Department on Lake Ontario have done nothing to boast of this War and the Americans unless other Officers & Crews are got for our Vessels will make themselves masters of that Lake next Spring. Some Merchant Vessels have been taken in Sight of the Royal George by small armed American Vessels and no exertion made to save them or rescue them A Lieut of the British Navy arrived yesterday at Niagara who I believe will have the Command of One and some others I believe with a Crew from Halifax are coming and four Vessels are ordered to be built two at Kingston and two at York there is no doubt that the Enemy will try every means in their power to make themselves masters of both Lakes Ontario & Erie

"No troops I believe are yet on their way here, though it has been frequently reported there were except twenty of the Royal Artillery and an Officer who I believe are now on the road between Kingston & this they are much wanted here for though we have 2 Companies of Militia Artillery on the lines its not enough and men from the 41st & 49th have sometimes to Assist in Manning the Guns Some troops I saw in a Montreal paper to day are on their march from Halifax to Quebec under the command of Lt Col Hamilton of the 100th Regt what number it is not said

"I saw English papers as late as 25th Augt there is hardly anything said about the War with the Americans and I only see an account of one Regt going to Halifax, I think its the 97th though there are lists of the reinforcements going to Portugal & Spain the papers nearly filled with accounts of Lord Wellington's great Victories in Spain & Portugal A prayer has been ordered to be used throughout the United Kingdom of Eng[land] & Ireland thanking the Almighty for our Successes in Spain particularly for the Victory over the French at the Battle of Salamanca No more titles can be given Lord Wellington than he allready has for he has Spanish & Portugese ones enough to fill half a sheet of paper nearly I believe they are now at a loss to know what rewards to make him for his splendid achievements.

St Regis a small Town in Lower Canada which was taken some time ago by the Americans has lately been retaken by us & a company of Americans were lately taken at a place called River Sable by a party of Militia.

"General Dearborn the Commander in Chief of the American Army its said is going against Montreal with 16 000 men they have not many troops in Lower Canada, yet I fancy General Dearborn will meet with a warm reception if he goes there. There are two Regts raised in Lower Canada since the War one called the Voltigeurs & the other Voyageurs there are fine active Canadians in each

"We are flattered notwithstanding the preparations we are making for War with hopes of a speedy and honorable peace Sir John B Warren is said to be at Washington and all differences between the two countries is settled except the Naturalization of British born subjects who come to

America respecting this our Ambassador and Mr Monroe cannot agree.

I am sorry it has not been in my power to pay the Auction Acct but intend to pay it before I get the prize money,[1] for I do not know when if ever I get any. I am anxious to pay Mr Pattinson[2] the money I borrowed of him last Summer. I have been disappointed in getting money here otherwise I would have done it before this. I wish Alex. to pay what he owed me to Mr Pattinson & hope he has done it if not beg that he will now and send me a receipt of it. Mr Brush[3] gave a draft on me favour Doctr Day or Mr Eastman & cannot recollect which for the hundred dollars which he lent Major Chambers. This draft he begged me to accept which to oblige him I did at Detroit. The draft was lost in the Caledonia or Detroit so Doctr Day and Mr Eastman have both wrote me and both of them have requested me to pay it but I have never received the money yet from Chambers tho it has been ready for me a long time, indeed I could have had it any time when I pleased to call for it but seeing no one authorized to receive it I never got it of him. The Money I think I will get now & send it to Mr Brush on his giving me a proper receipt for it mentioning every circumstance respecting the transaction that I may not hereafter be liable to pay the money & have to suffer for wishing to oblige him & his Friends that Day. I would like to let Mr Brush have his grey mare at the price he sold her to me for I have more horses than I know what to do with. A receipt from Mr Pattinson will be all I want for that amount & I will then send her to him but he must pay the charges of her bringing up if any. I could sell her but wish him to have her again as he appeared partial to her.

"Elizabeth Meredith's Miniature picture I have got but do not like to send it now.

"Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters

"Your dutiful and Affectionate Son
Charles Askin

"P.S. I wish it was possible to get the pistol you lent Mr Pattinson.

"to John Askin Esqr
"Care of Matthew Dolson Esqr
River Thames—Sandwich."

(Burton Historical Library, Askin Papers)

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[1] Awarded for the capture of Detroit.

[2] Richard Pattinson, a merchant at Sandwich and a member of the Legislative Assembly for Essex, 1812-1816.

[3] Elijah Brush of Detroit, husband of his sister Adelaide.

An official return has been preserved of the casualties of the Second Lincoln of which the flank companies and a considerable portion of the rest of the regiment had been on service since the declaration of war had been announced

"List of men belonging to the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia who have been wounded or have died since the 26th of June last

Stephen Peer Morris Derrick (or Detrick)	Wounded at Queenston Oct 13th since recovered
Charles Cook	Shot through the thigh at Fort Erie 28th Novr recovering slowly
Gershom Conger John Clark *David Tallan *Gabriel Smith John Gallipo David Bouck Daniel Millard *Hyre Waters *Daniel Hickson Benjamin Skinner Orman Ensign William Brooks Colin McCallum John Hodgkins James Stevenson Peter Wright *Lewis David George Couch	Died since 28th Novr

"Note—The names marked with a (*) were single men the others were men with families

"Chippawa Jany 1st 1813

"Thomas Clark Lt Col 2nd Lincoln Militia"

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No. 43

RECORDS OF NIAGARA

A Collection of Contemporary Letters and Documents

1812

Collected and Edited
by
BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK

Published by the
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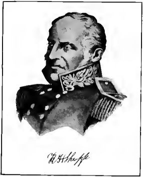

R H Sheaffe

— Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe —

PREFACE

The documents printed in the following pages have been collected from a variety of manuscript sources and will be found to complement those published in "The Documentary History of the Campaigns on the Niagara Frontier in 1812 and 1813," in 1896 and 1899 by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society They throw considerable further light on the civil and military affairs of that time

RECORDS OF NIAGARA

No. 43

1812

FROM THOMAS DICKSON TO JAMES BROCK

Queenston, 11th January, 1812

Sir,

Mr Addison having been very ill for these two weeks past, and although the Doctors now think him out of danger he will not be able to attend at York the ensuing Session of Parliament as Chaplain to the House of Assembly, by his desire, therefore I now write to Mr Stuart[1] to request him to officiate for Mr Addison, and the present is to request you to get His Honor the President to give his permission for Mr Stuart so to do.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedt Servant
Thomas Dickson

James Brock Esquire
Secretary to His Honor the President

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

Within a month Mr Addison had recovered sufficiently to be able to write the following letter.

Niagara, Feby 8th, 1812

To His Excellency Genl Brock,

May it please your Excellency

Mr Petets[2] having made me acquainted with the probability of a new District being formed, at the Head of Lake Ontario[3] in which he contemplates to remove and establish himself and having suggested to me a desire to obtain the office of Clerk of the Peace or Register in the event of such a Division taking place, I have taken the liberty to recommend Mr. Peters to your Excellency's notice as a person whom I have long known and whom I believe to be every way qualified to fill either of those Offices above mentioned.

---

[1] Reverend George Okill Stuart, minister of the Church of England at York

[2] William Birdseye Peters, a son of Reverend Samuel Peters

[3] Formed in 1816 as the District of Gore.

I have the honor to be
your Excellency's most Obedt
& most Hble Servt

Robt. Addison,
Minr. of Niagara

(Dominion Archives Sundries Upper Canada, 1812)

FROM JOSEPH EDWARDS TO HON JOHN McGILL

Niagara, 17th Jan., 1812.

Sir,—

In accounting for the above balance [£126.15.0] permit me to observe that a continuance of work for the amount has been contracted for, some part of the money advanced and about £20 of the work actually done, but the men through their tardiness being catched by the frost when, as they say, within two days of finishing I could not examine the same Of course they remain in part unpaid, and the whole uncharged An exception may again be made to the purchase of spades under the impression that the law requires persons performing Statute Duty to come prepared with those articles The British Statute does the same, but implements are also furnished, and I am fully convinced that the purchase of wheelbarrows and planks in addition to the above would be of public use on that road to assist the Statute Labour when the public money is expended.

It may be thought that I have unnecessarily protracted the appropriation of the money, but I am confident the delay has been of good to the Public, since it has enabled me to see the utility of a continued ditch on one side only of the road, the water always finding its level has pointed out the places where to bridge across a channel dug to let the water pass, and has had the most happy effect on this road.

As to the £45 appropriated to the cross-road in Grantham, it is untouched in my desk Soon after it was known that the money was voted, I was applied to by one Joel Austin, and who, I dare say would have done the work faithfully Not having been then appointed I could only promise to hear his proposals, when that took place, he, however, it seems, went and having boasted of having got the contract and I soon found a violent party (Methodists) each individual of which had anticipated a share of the money, was formed against him After being appointed on the 5th of June, I twice examined the place, which I found little more than a pathway, a long narrow causeway seemingly not wider than ten feet, with a ditch close on each side, made diagonally across the lands of a few farmers for their convenience in going to mill; in no place 30 ft wide, and when speaking to some of them about moving their fences was answered that they would expect the spaces between the concessions in lieu. Some time after, in company with Mr Crooks and Peter Ball Esq, I again examined the road, and found the same indifference among the few we could see; one would remove his fence if the other did This is not yet done to my knowledge and until it is, in my opinion, any money laid out would be thrown away

I have the honor to be &c
Jos'h Edwards, Comm'r &c

Hon John McGill, Inspector &c, &c, York

The following letters show that Hugh Alexander carried on his business at Fort Erie until it was abruptly terminated by the declaration of war

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO PARKER, GERRARD, OGILVIE & CO

Fort Erie Jany 20, 1812.

When in Montreal last August I left with you twelve barrels pork and requested that the proceeds should be paid to Thos Clark Esqr on his acct at Montreal together with twenty barrels of flour which was still at that time at Prescot or should Capt Gilkison keep that flour he was to remit to you 45£ Currency which he informed me this fall he had done —some time after Mr Clark's return I called to know if he had received the above which he said he had not and not having heard anything from him on the subject I have now drawn on you in favor of Messrs Lee & Clark for £90 Cy, which you will I trust have the goodness to honor and should the above [have] been passed to Mr Clark's credit since he left Montreal I will remit you either bill or flour early in the spring sufficient to discharge the above draft together with whatever compensation you may think right for the use of the money

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ALEXANDER REA

March 21, 1812, Fort Erie

I wrote you on 3 Oct 1811 requesting you to send the whole of the phials which you had on hand when I left Montreal but have not had the pleasure to hear from you since, in consequence of which I am led to believe that the letter must have been miscarried in which case if you have the said phials I will thank you to forward them to Mr McGevack as early as there will be any opportunity of forwarding as I have made promises on the supposition that they would have come last fall and the persons to whom I have promised are anxiously waiting their arrival this spring supposing they are on the communication last fall you will please advise me as soon as possible to say whether you have the phials yet or if you have sent them and what the profits are of your market this season

---

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO ROBERT GILLESPIE

Fort Erie Mar 25, 1812

Yours 20th February came to hand the 15th instant by which I am very well pleased to see the markets are looking up

I have made an offer to Government for my pork and 200 barrels of flour but am not certain as yet whether it will be accepted or not as there is only a small quantity as yet wanted in this Province I shall be glad to hear from you as often as leisure will permit

---

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JABEZ D DE WITT

Fort Erie, Mar 25, 1812

I wrote you on the 3rd of Oct 1811, inclosing a small memorandum for some articles in your line of business but have not as yet had the pleasure to hear from you, therefore have been necessitated to procure the articles from another quarter--you will therefore have the goodness not to send the articles this spring as I shall have no use for them at present

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WILLIAM ALEXANDER NEAR SCHENECTADY

Fort Erie, Mar 26, 1812

The first of the month I was at Long Point and Ephraim informed me that he was to remit you some money if possible by the first of April I now enclose you sixty dollars which goes forward by mail and I hope will arrive safe and which place to his credit

I went to see McDougall but he was gone to York But left a line for me to say that he would be at this place in April and perhaps would have it in his power to pay part—business at this place is very dull at present Ephraim was well when I left Long Point and also your friends in this quarter With compliments to Mrs Alexander and family

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, March 30th, 1812

Your favor of the 23rd instant came duly to hand mentioning our verbal agreement respecting the transport business this season in which I will do the business for what you have stated and part which you have omitted at 1/6 N Y C. per barrel from this place to Chippawa, that being the same also as last year

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie Ap 1, 1812

Agreeable to your request I called on Mr Lovejoy with your draft who mentioned he had remitted you the amount per Dr Cotham also I spoke to Mr Grosvenor presenting Mr McGevack's two accts, the one say £10 8 0 currency which he has paid to Messrs Clark and Street by request of Thomas Clark, Esqr, and the other small amount of £2 16 0 Cy will be more convenient for him to settle in the same way as he has a demand against John Osborne who is in Clark and Street's employ Having seen Mr Clark's acct in favor of Mr McGevack of Aug 16 1811 for the said sum of £10 8.0 per Clark and Street's receipt for the said money by Mr Osborne I am well convinced that Mr Grosvenor's statement is correct, in consequence of which I now enclose to you the above two accts and also your draft on Mr Joshua Lovejoy for £9 2 0 N Y C.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CLARK AND STREET

Fort Erie, April 6, 1812

Having made a contract with a Mr Goodwin at Chippawa to build a boat for me which he now informs me will be out of his power unless I can procure the plank and scantling from you for that purpose If you will therefore have the goodness to let him have the quantity I will pay you for the same and you will confer a favor on yours &c.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO JAMES CROOKS

Fort Erie, April 18, 1812

Having a small acct with Seth Winslow on his leaving this place he sent me the enclosed draft on W. & J. Crooks for £9 7 3 N Y C., dated 24th instant, his reason for which date is best known to himself Having just heard that he has resigned I shall request the favor of your acceptance, if agreeable. If it is not in your power to accept it you will have the goodness to deliver the written draft to the bearer, Mr Grant

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FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO W. & J. CROOKS

Fort Erie, May 2, 1812

Yours of the 24th came to hand yesterday by which I find that £5 15 8 N Y C. on Mr Winslow's draft has been collected and as there is only remaining £3 11 7 due on the draft perhaps you can have it in your power the next time to draw the same as you, I should expect are his agents in this quarter and in so doing you will confer a favor on yours &c.

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO WEST & HASBROOK, ONONDAGA

Fort Erie, May 14, 1812

Your favor of 22 April I received the 4th instant and in answer to which I have to state that the 70 bbls of salt was Mr McCormick's property if returned by the time mentioned in your letter, say June 1 I shall also mention to Mr Sides? to be in readiness for you the first time I see him as to the delivery of salt at this place I am at a loss to state my price as very little is sold and if any it is on a credit of perhaps 12 months at 40/ per bbl You will have the goodness to collect all you possibly can from Mr Mead and forward it as you mentioned to Mr McCormick If the laws will permit, if not forward it to Lewiston to whoever is your agent at that place or Mr Joshua Fairbanks as you see proper

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO CAPT WILLIAM MILLS

Fort Erie, May 30, 1812

I understand that you have a quantity of cordage on hand in which I presume you have different sizes Will you have the goodness to send by the return of the ship sixty fathoms of 6 inch or 6¼ jute cable for the Chippewa with a bill of the same and when payable If you could make it payable the 1st Oct next it would suit me best

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 24 1812

I enclose you here my acct for baking 2350 lbs biscuit for the South West Company—amount £14 2 0 N Y C., which you will please pass to my credit I also made use of 14 bbls flour for said biscuit which was to be replaced at Queenston four of which I have received, the other ten will you have the goodness to mark H A and ship with the rest of my flour should Gray's sloop be at Queenston I should wish you to ship any flour in her to Prescott—if not, send it by the first safe vessel

FROM HUGH ALEXANDER TO GRANT AND KERBY

Fort Erie, June 25, 1812

I have in my store 14 bbls Potash and Pearl as was marked G H for Messrs Grosvenor and Hancock, Buffalo, and will be forwarded by the boat next trip, you will please to ship them in the first safe vessel to Prescott and consign them to Messrs Tappan & Sewall, Montreal All flour is from this at present

Relations with the United States had become so unsatisfactory and menacing that instructions were issued to place the frontier military posts in Upper Canada in a suitable condition to resist an attack

FROM NOAH FREER TO LIEUT.-COLONEL BRUYERES R.E.

Military Secretary's Office,
Quebec, 3rd February, 1812

Sir,

I am directed by the Commander of the Forces to desire that you will take measures and give such orders as may be necessary that the following services at the posts mentioned in Upper Canada be executed with as little delay as possible, viz:

Fort George

The works &c at this station to undergo such repair as is necessary to render the post tenable

Fort Chippawa

The picketting around this post to be repaired or renewed

Fort Erie

The work already executed at this post to be closed.

Fort Amherstburg

To be made tenable

St Joseph's

The picketting at this post to be repaired or renewed.

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

Two letters from Charles Askin to his father, then living at a house, which he had named Strabane, near Sandwich, throw some interesting light on the proceedings of the provincial parliament

York, 24th February, 1812

Dear Father

I have been here some days on business, part of which is to try and get some money from the Legislature to be laid out on a road passing through the place where I live[1] and to get exchanged from the Regt of Militia to which I now belong into one in the district of Niagara, which I believe I will have no difficulty in doing as the President[2] has no objection to it I had the honor of dining with him the day after my arrival here and have an invitation to a Ball he gives to night, to which I intend going The Legislature have not done much yet, a bill has passed the lower House respecting the Militia In every district there are to be two light companies to consist of one hundred men each who are to be called out six days in every month until they are perfect in their exercise The law gives power to the President or person administering the Government to suspend such Officers of the Militia as he thinks proper A Law respecting carriages meeting on the road has also passed the House, all carriages meeting are to turn to the right and give half the road whether going or coming from Market[1] A few days before I left home I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you and one from Johny—I cannot answer yours till I return home but hope I shall soon have an opportunity of doing it after I get there I expected James all winter but begin to fear now I shall not see till next summer.

---

[1] The Canboro Road

[2] General Brock

Feb 25th

I saw Capt Elliott[2] last night at the Dance, he told me he had a letter from Archange to Theresa

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN, SR.

40 Mile Creek, Feby 28th, 1812

Dear Father,

I am now on my way from York where I have been some time and from which place I wrote to you a few days ago. A person who I have met here on his way to Detroit gives me a favorable opportunity of writing to you, which I embrace tho' I have little to say The Legislature have done little this Session as yet and as the house is soon to be dissolved there will not be much done A new Militia Act is passed. In every Regt there are to be two flank companies to consist of one hundred men each which are to be out six days in every month for the purpose of training until they are perfect in their exercise, regular soldiers will be employed to drill them I believe the house has voted £8000 to the President to be laid out in such a manner as he thinks best, for having the Militia trained.

A law respecting travellers on the road meeting has also

passed the house all persons meeting in carriages or sleighs are to give half the road and after December next no one is to drive a sleigh without Bells

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[1] Entitled "An Act to Prevent Damages to Travellers on the Highways in this Province."

[2] Mathew Elliott, then member of the Legislative Assembly for the County of Essex

Mr. Nichol[1] was committed to Gaol in York by a warrant from the Speaker of the House of Commons the day before I left it, this was for writing something to Major Halton[2] offensive to them in justification of his conduct when wrongfully accused by that House of not having accounted for Public money in his hands—it's so lengthy a business that I shall not enter more fully into it, as I should then not be able to give you all the particulars of it[3]—and you will have the whole of it from the members when they return home which will be soon

Orders have been received lately from Below to fortify York I met the Engineer here this evening from Niagara on his way there (probably for that purpose)

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

By a proclamation dated at York on 25th February, 1812 the following persons were appointed commissioners in the Niagara District to carry into effect the Act recently passed for the prevention of seditious conduct Joseph Edwards of Niagara John Warren, Sen., of Bertie, John Warren of Bertie, Samuel Street of Willoughby Thomas Clark of Stamford Thomas Dickson of Queenston, William Crooks of Grimsby and Samuel Hatt of Ancaster, all of them being magistrates The letter of Thomas Clark acknowledging his appointment, has been preserved

FROM THOMAS CLARK TO JAMES BROCK

Stamford, March 12th, 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ulto., inclosing a Commission from His Honor the President empowering me to carry into effect an Act passed in the Fourth Session of the Third Provincial Parliament of this Province—entitled an Act for the better securing this Province against all seditious attempts or designs to disturb the tranquility thereof

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[1] Robert Nichol, then a commissioner for highways in the London District

[2] William Halton, civil secretary to Lieut.-Governor Gore

[3] See Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol XIX, pp 10-19

To which Commission please make known to His Honor the President that strict attention will be paid by,

Sir,

Your most obedt servt,

Thomas Clark

James Brock, Esqr, &c, &c, &c

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

The following petition from three enterprising inhabitants throws some light on economic conditions

To His Honor Isaac Brock, Esquire, President administering the Government of the Province of Upper Canada and Major-General commanding His Majesty's Forces within the same

The Petition of James Macklem, John Fanning and Benjamin Hardison of the District of Niagara Gentlemen

Humbly Sheweth,

That your Petitioners, four years since, laid before His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore a Petition praying for a Grant of a certain mill-seat lying below the mouth of the river Welland or Chippawa in the Township of Stamford wherefrom His Excellency promised that he would do everything which laid in his power in our behalf, but probably owing to a multiplicity of business which engaged his attention, we never obtained a final answer on the subject

Your petitioners have resided in this Province about twenty years, during which period it has been their highest ambition to promote its true Interest and Prosperity by the encouragement of its population and by the promotion of Works of Public utility which exertions they conceive, have been crowned with a Success in most respects equal to their wishes One of your Petitioners John Fanning, has been at heavy expenses in erecting Mills in this part of the Province, particularly one at Black Creek, which was consumed by fire in February last whereby he sustained a loss of two thousand Bushels of Wheat

It is impossible for us to point out the great want of Mills in this part of the Province, the Mills now erected at the Falls and at Bridgewater cannot manufacture near the quantity of Grain now raised in this Quarter of the Country, and there are now in the aforesaid Mills upwards of twenty thousand bushels of Wheat, though the inhabitants cannot obtain sufficient Flour for their own consumption The said

Mills being possessed by a company who adopt such Rules and Regulations respecting them as best suit themselves, the inhabitants having no alternative but to comply with those Measures consider themselves much aggrieved and burthened[1] Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honor will be pleased to take this Grievance into your wise consideration together with the aforesaid Petition laid before His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore

But if your Honor do not think proper to grant to your Petitioners the said Mill-seat we most earnestly hope and pray that your Honor will not cause it to be granted to the aforesaid Company[2] but to some worthy Person wholly unconnected with said Company

If, in the opinion of your Honor, this Petition would have greater weight with you by having the support of five hundred of the most respectable inhabitants in this Quarter, their Signatures for that purpose may be obtained within a few Days

We further pray that your Honor will be pleased to cause the Honorable Council to take this into their wise consideration and give us an answer to our former Petition which was ably supported by the most respectable inhabitants in this part of the Province

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray

James Macklem[3]
District of Niagara John Fanning[4]
March 31st, 1812 Benjamin Hardison[5]

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, 1812)

The amended Militia Act was formally assented to on March 6th, when the provincial parliament was prorogued

and very soon after orders were sent to the commanding officers of all regiments to assemble their men and call for volunteers to form the flank companies to be trained for six days in each month until reported efficient. Several of the reports of these officers have been preserved.

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[1] This discontent seems to have found expression in the election of John Fanning as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln in May, 1812. He died soon after and was succeeded by Isaac Swayze

[2] Apparently Clark and Street

[3] He had immigrated from Pennsylvania about 1794 and established a store at Chippawa (see Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol XXVI, p 251)

[4] Fanning had come to Upper Canada about 1781 from South Carolina, where he forfeited property, as a Loyalist, valued at £1103 10s, and married the daughter of a Loyalist He had managed an inn at Chippawa for several years

[5] He had lived in the province since 1776 and had been a member of the Legislative Assembly for the fourth riding of Lincoln and Norfolk, 1797 1800 See Papers and Records, Ontario Historical Society, XXIV, p 76

FROM COLONEL RALFE CLENCH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Niagara, 1st April, 1812

Sir,

I enclose the return of the First Regiment of the County of Lincoln Militia by which you will see our total strength with the number of our loyal men who volunteered. You will likewise notice the great number who did not and I am happy to say that the major part of those persons are people from the United States lately with a few of our malcontent settlers in the towns of Niagara and Queenston and village of St Davids where Captain Robertson's[1] mostly reside

I also enclose a letter from Lieut Colonel Kerr[2] which he has stated to me personally to be his resignation This you will please lay before His Honor, the President, and I will thank you to let me know his pleasure thereon as soon as possible

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Stamford, April 3rd, 1812

Sir,

I had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ulto in consequence of which the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia under my command was called out and met yesterday in the Township of Thorold when the supplementary Militia Law was explained as fully as in my power Herein you have the field return of the regiment by which it will appear that out of 550 men 522 volunteered to be trained and exercised in the flank companies when and in what manner may be directed by His Honor the President

By the return you will perceive that two of my companies are without captains, Captains Warner & Reilly[3] having some time ago resigned from infirmity & old age Should His Honor, the President think proper to appoint others in their place, give me leave to recommend Mr Robert Grant of Queenston, who has formerly been a captain of militia in the Western District and Lieut John Decow, the oldest lieutenant in my Regiment

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[1] William Robertson, promoted to be Major, 1 June, 1812 and Lieutenant-Colonel, 27 June, 1812

[2] Dr Robert Kerr

[3] Probably Christian Warner and John Reilly, both of whom had been sergeants in Butler's Rangers.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

FROM LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN WARREN[1] TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW

Fort Erie, 12th April, 1812

Sir,

I have had the honor of receiving your circular letter of the 12th ulto with the supplementary to the Militia Law, passed the last Session of the Legislature, saying

That His Honor the President was anxious that the provisions therein contained should be explained to the men under my command, and that whatever measures His Honor might find it expedient to adopt he would dispense with a ballot until the last emergency.

I have great satisfaction in acquainting you that the behavior of the 3rd Regiment of Lincoln Militia has precluded the necessity of a ballot Four companies of the Regiment are resident in the Townships of Bertie and Humberstone, the other four companies reside in Willoughby Crowland and Wainfleet, on the east side of the Chippawa to the distance of thirty miles up that creek It therefore became me to consider the ease of the men, by lessening the fatigue of their assembling at too great a distance from their farms The first four companies were ordered to assemble in Bertie on the 9th instant and the other four companies to form at the mouth of the Chippawa on the 10th, at both of which places I attended

Of the companies of Bertie and Humberstone every man voluntarily turned out to the number of two hundred and six. The four companies at Chippawa also behaved well, out of two hundred and eleven on parade, only five stood fast

---

[1] John Warren, Sr had come to Canada with the 8th Regiment as a drummer, but was appointed about 1780 assistant commissary at Fort Erie and held that appointment until his death in 1813 He was one of the first Justices of the Peace in the district of Nassau and the first Collector of Customs at the port of Fort Erie Passage, with an outpost at Long Point and inspector of pot and pearl ashes.

While the circles were formed at both places and I had read and explained the acts, the officers were called upon to step forward and take the oath and after setting the example not the least hesitation was made, and every man, officers and privates, stood around while Messrs. Street and Crowell Wilson administered it

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C., 1812)

A circular letter from Brock was sent to twenty-five officers commanding regiments of militia, including the five regiments of the County of Lincoln, giving them carefully considered instructions for the organization and training of the flank companies to be formed in their regiments

Head Quarters, York, 8th April, 1812

Sir,

The power which is vested in the person administering the government by the amended act of the militia passed the last session of the Provincial Parliament of forming two flank companies to be taken indiscriminately from the battalion, being limited to the end of the ensuing session would almost deter me from incurring public expense upon a system which will cease to operate before its utility and efficacy can well be ascertained

But being anxious at this important crisis to organize an armed force with a view to future exigencies and likewise to demonstrate by practical experience the degree of facility with which it may be trained for service, I have to request you to adopt immediate measures for forming and completing from among such men as voluntarily offer to serve two companies not to exceed 1 captain, 2 subalterns, 2 sergeants, 1 drummer and 40 rank and file each in the regiment under your command.

You will have the goodness to recommend who you conceive the best qualified to undertake this important duty The nomination of the subalterns is left to your discretion

Such other regiments as are conveniently situated to receive military instruction shall have an opportunity offered them of shewing their ardor in the public service which cannot fail creating a laudable emulation among the different corps

Assisted by your zeal, prudence and intelligence, I entertain the pleasing hope of meeting with very considerable success and of being able to establish the sound policy of rendering permanent at the end of the present war, a code of military instruction little burdensome to individuals and every way calculated to secure a powerful internal defence against hostile aggression

Printed rules and regulations for your future guidance shall be forwarded as soon as possible, the most simple and at the same time the most useful movements have been selected for the practice of the militia.

Experience has shewn the absolute necessity of adopting every possible precaution to preserve in a proper state the arms issued to the militia and of guarding against the heavy defalcations that have heretofore occurred.

For which purpose you are authorized to prepare one or more depots in situations the most safe and convenient for assembling and drilling the men by squads and where the arms are to be lodged after each day of exercise.

You are allowed to charge in your contingent account at the rate of five pounds yearly for every twenty muskets issued for the use of the men, which sum it is supposed will prove ample to defray every expense of keeping the arms and accoutrements in a complete state of repair.

You will make application to the officer commanding at Fort George[1] for the number of arms and accoutrements wanting to complete the men actually engaged to serve in the flank companies and that officer has been instructed to comply with your requisition upon your transmitting duplicate receipts, one of which is to be forwarded to head quarters, that you may become responsible for the articles delivered to your order, at the same time the most liberal construction will be given to any representation accounting for such contingencies as are incident to the service.

John Clark[2] has been appointed to perform the duties of adjutant under your command. Should you find him incompetent to the task, you will feel it your duty to report the circumstances from whatever source it may arise.

I cannot dismiss this subject without expressing my expectations that your knowledge of the localities of the country will enable you to make such arrangements as will give the utmost facility to the important object in view without subjecting the men to any material inconvenience. Coming generously forward with an offer of their services they are the more entitled to every consideration.

Not only the place but likewise the time for assembling the companies or squads will be strictly attended to by you. It is my earnest wish that the little the men have to learn

may be acquired by way of a pastime and not looked upon in the light of an irksome restraint. The generality of the inhabitants being already acquainted with the use of the musket have the less to learn. You may therefore under the existing circumstances limit the parade of the companies to three times in each month.

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[1] Other regiments were authorized to draw arms, &c., from Kingston, York and Amherstburg, according to convenience.

[2] For the 1st Regiment of Lincoln. James Kerby was appointed adjutant of the 2nd, Henry Trout of the 3rd, John Taylor of the 4th, and John W. McIntyre of the 5th. Lieut. Colonel Johnson Butler commanded the 4th and Major Richard Hatt, the 5th Lincoln.

A little attention on the part of the men will very soon enable you to reduce even that short term of attendance. The chief object of the flank companies is to have constantly in readiness a force composed of loyal brave and respectable young men, so far instructed as to enable the Government on any emergency to engraft such portion of the militia as may be necessary on a stock capable of giving aid in forming them for military service. To your prudence and exertions I confidently look for the attainment of a system so evidently conducive to the safety and tranquillity of the province.

(Dominion Archives. Militia Papers, U.C.M.D. 31)

The following documents give some indication of the care taken by Brock to appoint trusty returning officers and fix the date of the polling at a time agreeable to the candidates favored by him.

Queenston, 13th May, 1812

Received from Archibald Oliver, Corporal 41st Regiment on this Thirteenth day of May 1812 one parcel containing Writs and Instructions for me as Returning Officer of Members for the Third Riding of the County of Lincoln, to serve in the new Parliament at the ensuing Election.

James Kerby

(Dominion Archives, Sundries 1812)

Burford 6th May, 1812

Received from the bearers two Natives, the packet containing the Writ of Election &c.

Sir your most
obedient and humble
Servant

(Unaddressed) William D. Bowen

(Dominion Archives. Sundries, 1812)

FROM J B ROUSSEAU TO JAMES BROCK

Ancaster, 19th May, 1812

Sir,

I enclose you two receipts, one from Mr Wm D Bowen, the other from Mr John Bostwick, acknowledging having received their Writs of Election

Mr Hebron's[1] and Durand's I delivered myself I took notice of your direction not to forward Mr Bostwick's too early But the Man that I sent to Col Nichol with Col Talbot's letter got there sooner than I expected, of course he received it a few days earlier than you wished I hope it may be no ways material

I enclose you a letter from Mr Bostwick, also one for His Honor the President

I am Sir
your very obedient
humble servant,

J B Rousseau

James Brock, Esqr

(Dominion Archives Sundries 1812)

A letter from Charles Askin to his father announced the purchase of the mills and adjacent lands in the township of Canboro

Canborough, May 22nd 1812

Dear Father

I have been anxiously waiting to have an opportunity to write to inform you that I had jointly with Alexr Hamilton purchased of George Hamilton (who has lately bought of Mr Canby) the Mills[2] and one thousand acres of land situated near them which we have for some time past leased for these we are to pay £2000 N Y C[3] in ten years in goods at retail price payable by installment—this I do not conceive to be more than about £1500 in money, and the land at the lowest valuation is worth 10/ an acre which would reduce the Mills dwelling house Distillery and other house to £1000 which is thought very little for them had it been in my power to have consulted you before I made the bargain I should have done it but it was impossible to do it for unless it was made immediately when it was proposed there was a great chance of it falling through and were I to have declined making the bargain, I was making Alexr Hamilton lose what he thought a good one for he would have nothing to do with the business unless I joined him—George Hamilton bought 14 000 acres of this Township, on part of which were the Mills, for which he pays £7000 in 5 years with interest—this bargain is considered an excellent one by Mr Thomas Clark Mr Dickson[2] & some others, who have speculated a good deal themselves in land & know the value of it well—Though I have no society here and have little or no amusement, I am well pleased with my situation for I am kept busy and have not time to be lonesome and I think my prospects of making something are greater than they were in any situation I have been in—I intend to leave this in a month to go and pay you a visit and should I have time I shall go to St Josephs to see Johny [3]

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[1] Probably William G Hepburn

[2] Probably the mills built by Canby on Moore's Creek (see Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol XXIV, pp 35 36)

[3] $10,000

I am in haste and must conclude Please give my love to my dear Mother my Brothers and Sister

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

A list of ships on Lake Ontario in 1811-1812 compiled from returns of lighthouse dues collected at Niagara and York, shows that commerce was actively conducted by water

Schooner	Ontario	87 tons
"	Niagara	55 tons
"	Collector	50½ tons
"	Prince Edward	77 tons
"	Julia	53 tons
"	Fair American	82½ tons
"	Governor Simcoe	136 tons
Sloop	Elizabeth	48 tons
Schooner	Lady Gore	46 tons
"	Genl Hunter	36 tons
"	Mary	35 tons
"	Two Brothers	36 tons
"	Eagle	26 tons
"	British Queen	23 tons
"	Sophia	25 tons
"	Lark	26 tons
Sloop	Marianne	36 tons
Schooner	Experiment	55 tons
Sloop	Enterprise	21 tons
Schooner	Charles and Ann	99 tons
"	Lord Nelson	46 tons
Sloop	Republican	17 tons
Schooner	Mary	51 tons

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[2] William Dickson of Niagara

[3] His half-brother, John Askin, Jr, storekeeper for the Indian Department at St Joseph's Island

The Ontario, Niagara Collector, Julia, Fair American, Experiment, Charles and Ann, Lord Nelson, and Mary were purchased by the Navy Department of the United States and armed as ships of war. Several others were employed as transports by the British naval authorities.

The remarkable success in recruiting the flank companies of the militia with volunteers was promptly acknowledged by General Brock in a public manner:

Circular Government House,

York, 25th May, 1812

Militia General Order

The very satisfactory reports made to the President by the officers commanding corps of the spirit and zeal manifested by the men in volunteering their services for the flank companies has afforded His Honor the most lively gratification and confirmed the opinion which he was always disposed to entertain of their determination to defend bravely their country and in emulation of their veteran fathers evince by deeds the ardent loyalty they have so often professed. Conduct so honorable and dignified has not failed making a deep impression on the Provincial Government, and to increase if possible their anxious desire to contribute everything in their power towards the comfort and happiness of the people.

With this view they have humbly solicited His Royal Highness the Prince Regent for his gracious permission to allot to the wives and children of such soldiers, militia and marines who may be killed in the present contest[1] a portion of the waste lands of the Crown and to afford relief to such as may be disabled in the service for whom no provision is otherwise provided.

By command of the President,
Æneas Shaw,
Adj. Genl. Militia
Upper Canada

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, M.D. 31)

A letter from George Hamilton to Thomas McKee, apparently about the middle of May, gives a striking account of military activity.

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[1] War was not actually declared by the United States until June 18.

Queenston May — 1812

The Americans are assembling & sending troops as fast as in their power. A company came in yesterday & one the day before & another expected to-day & another to-morrow & so on to the end of the week. I can assure that the river has at present quite a martial appearance. The two forts so close below, the Royal George at anchor between them, the American frigate[1] expected up every day, a large scow & bateau filled with soldiers hauling stone for the garrison at York, huts with soldiers on one side, an encampment at McBride's on the other, another at Miller's & stragglers at Lewiston. Capt Powell[2] & riflemen at the great guns, Crooks[3] & his flankers in the yard here all yesterday, Alexr[4] & his troopers on their way to the 12. McEwen[5] and his flankers there also. Capt Bullock[6] is indefatigable with the flankers on the mountain & with Col Clark has been drilling them every day for this week past. If the Yankees come after all the Devil is in them, especially when my troopers[7] take the field we'll chop off their heads like heads of thistles.

(Toronto Public Library)

A letter from George Hamilton to his father-in-law, contains further details of the active preparations in progress for the defence of the frontier.

FROM GEORGE HAMILTON TO WILLIAM JARVIS

Niagara, 5th June, 1812

Dear Sir,

The Royal George is now at the wharf with 250 recruits belonging to the 41st Regiment and the Gloster in sight with 50 more on board which you will agree with me is no contemptible addition to our forces here. Yesterday we had a grand display on the plains. Col Procter with the 41st Regt in the centre, Major Merritt with his light horse on the right and Captain Powell with his company of artillery on the left and to do them no more than justice they fired remarkably well The General[1] appeared highly pleased with them as also the Sheriff's troop The General was pleased to say the other day he wished another troop to be raised in Stamford and from that to Fort Erie and wished me to take the command of it which I had not the slightest objection to, informing me that Merritt was to be Major of the whole As Alexander [Hamilton] who is Captain of the troop here had gone to Long Point and did not make his appearance I took possession of his jacket and accoutrements which luckily suited me exactly and appeared with Merritt as Captain of the troop and was complimented on my appearance and the new dress I had taken care however beforehand to state the case fairly and on waiting on the General afterwards he did not seem displeased but directed me to call on him to-morrow and he would present me with my commission I dined with him afterwards and am now here again only waiting his return from the garrison to be dubbed captain and the intent of this long preamble is to beg of you to assist me in getting my accoutrements

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[1] The Oneida

[2] Captain John Powell, 1st Lincoln Artillery

[3] Captain James Crooks, 1st Lincoln

[4] Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1st Troop, Niagara Light Dragoons

[5] Captain John McEwen, 1st Lincoln

[6] Captain Richard Bullock, 41st Regiment, Adjutant-General of Militia, 1838-1839

[7] He was then enlisting a second Troop for the Niagara Light Dragoons, which was never completed

(Toronto Public Library)

The first act of hostility on Lake Ontario was the capture of the merchant schooner Lord Nelson, owned by William and James Crooks of Grimsby by the United States brig of war, Oneida acting under special instructions from superior authority of which the following official account was given by her commander, Captain Melancthon T Woolsey in a letter to Paul Hamilton Secretary of the Navy

U S Brig Oneida
Sackets Harbour Roads,
June 9th 1812

Sir

I have the honour to inform you that I sailed on the 3rd instant on a cruise to the Westward On the 4th (off Pultney Ville) discovered three sail to windward apparently standing in for Genesee River—gave chase to them but night coming on and the weather being too hazey to run in for the mouth of the river haul'd off shore for the night under short sail At day light on the 5th discovered two schooners (supposed to be two of the three we had chased the day before) standing in for the land At 7 p m we brought to one of the schooners which proved to be the Lord Nelson from Prescot (a port opposite Ogdensburgh on the St Lawrence) said to be bound to Newark in Canada she had no papers on board other than a loose Journal and a bill of lading of a part of her Cargo, but no register licence or clearance w[h]ether it was intended to smuggle her Cargo on our shores or w[h]ether she was hovering along our shores to take on board property for the Canada market in violation of the Embargo law I was not able to determine But appearances were such as to warrant a suspicion of her intention to smuggle both ways I accordingly took her crew out and sent her in with my gunner on board as prize master to this port After dispatching her I stood off shore in chase of the other schooner which the master of the Lord Nelson informed me was the Mary Hatt,[1] also a British schooner but finding that she had crossed the line I hove up for this port in order to lay up the prize and make my report to the Department All the proofs which I can collect respecting her voyage I will transmit without delay to the District Attorney

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[1] Brock

In compliance with the recommendation from the President of the United States on April 1 the Congress had passed an act laying a general embargo for sixty days on all vessels then in port or hereafter arriving as a preliminary to a declaration of war The instructions sent to Woolsey soon after were so vague as to enable him to make seizures at discretion

Navy Department, April 8, 1812

Sir,

You will herewith receive a copy of the 'act laying an embargo, &c ' passed the 4th instant You will use all the means in your power to enforce this law

Advise and co-operate with the collector of customs

The proper objects of seizure are all vessels acting or found under such circumstances as may satisfy a strong suspicion of their intention to act in violation of this law

In enforcing this law we are not to violate the territorial jurisdiction of a foreign state

All vessels seized under this law are to be sent into port for adjudication the papers found on board of them are to be placed in the hands of the district attorney, who will thereupon proceed according to law

Paul Hamilton

M T Woolsey Lieut Commanding
Brig Oneida Sackett's Harbor New York[2]

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[1] Named in honour of a daughter of Richard Hatt of Ancaster

[2] Statement of the seizure of the British Schooner, Lord Nelson, by an American Vessel of War on the 5th June, 1812, thirteen days before the late war with the United States, Hamilton Journal and Express Office, 1841, p 12

The Lord Nelson was a new ship built at Niagara in 1811 and very well constructed As soon as her seizure was made known to them one of the owners went to Sackett's Harbour and offered to give security to abide the decision of the court of the United States on the charge of a violation of the embargo but the release of the ship was refused The declaration of war soon after put an end to all intercourse and under an interlocutory decree the Lord Nelson was sold and purchased for the Navy Department of the United States She was converted into a gunboat renamed the Scourge and armed with ten guns The purchase money $2 000 25 was paid into the hands of Theron Rudd clerk of the court to await a final decision of that court as to its disposal On the night of August 9 1813 while carrying all sail to escape from the British squadron the Scourge was struck by heavy squall and overset with the loss of most of her crew of fifty men After the conclusion of peace, a claim was made for compensation for an illegal seizure and in July 1817 a decree of the court was obtained for the payment to the owners of the money held by the clerk but it was discovered that he had appropriated it to his own use and become bankrupt After the death of William Crooks the suit was prosecuted against the government of the United States by Hon James Crooks his brother and after his death by their heirs, and after the death of those heirs by their heirs They valued the schooner at $5 000 and her cargo at $2 943 76 Their claim was kept before Congress for nearly a hunded years its justice was repeatedly admitted and two Presidents urged its payment in messages Finally on the 1st May 1914 judgment was given for the claimant in the sum of $5 000 with interest at four per cent per annum for ninety-two years, making in all nearly $24 000

Returns compiled early in July showed that the flank companies of most of the Lincoln regiments were much over the strength originally authorized On July 3 Captain Samuel Hatt's and Captain James Durand's flank companies of the 5th Lincoln were each reported to consist of three officers two sergeants and seventy two rank and file while Captain Jacob A Ball's battalion company of the same regiment only numbered two officers three sergeants and twenty two rank and file and Captain John D Servos's numbered three officers, three sergeants and twenty five rank and file Nine hundred men from the flank companies of the Lincoln and York militia were ordered to march to the Niagara frontier and arranged in four divisions the first or right division to be stationed at Fort Erie, the second at

Chippawa, the third at Queenston and the fourth at Fort George. The strength of the detachment for the eight division was fixed at three hundred men, and each of the others at two hundred. The first and second divisions were to receive orders through Lieut. Colonel Thomas Clark and the third and fourth through Colonel William Claus. On July 7 the third division was composed of four officers, three sergeants, one drummer and one hundred rank and file of the 41st Regiment commanded by Capt. P. L. Chambers, one sergeant and three troopers of the Niagara Light Dragoons, a captain, a sergeant and twelve rank and file of the Lincoln Artillery, Captain Samuel Hatt's flank company of the 5th Lincoln of three officers, three sergeants and sixty-three rank and file, Captain James Durand's flank company of the 5th Lincoln, of three officers, two sergeants and sixty-six rank and file, Captain John Chisholm's flank company of the 2nd York, of three officers, two sergeants and thirty-four rank and file, and Captain William Applegarth's flank company of the 2nd York, of two officers, three sergeants and forty-five rank and file. This body of militia numbering 246 of all ranks, was placed under the command of Captain Hatt.

The detachment forming the fourth division consisted of Captain James Crooks's flank company of the 1st Lincoln, of four officers, three sergeants and sixty-two rank and file, Captain John McEwen's flank company of the 1st Lincoln, of four officers, three sergeants and sixty-seven rank and file, Captain Lyon's rifle company of three officers, two sergeants and twenty-four rank and file, Captain Abraham Nelles's flank company of the 4th Lincoln, of three officers, three sergeants and seventy-seven rank and file, and Captain William Crooks's company of the 4th Lincoln of four officers, three sergeants and seventy-two rank and file. Making a force of 334 of all ranks, it was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Johnson Butler[1] of the 4th Lincoln.

The roll book of Captain John D. Servos's company of militia contains a list of persons excused or incapacitated from military service which is not without some local interest.

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[1] He died on service, 1st September, 1812, and was buried in the family burial plot.

Roll of males in the limits of Captain John D. Servos's company 1st Regt. (Lincoln Militia), September 7, 1812.

Age		Infirm	Remarks
67	Peter Ball		Half pay officer
56	Thomas Butler[1]		do do
60	Bernard Frey[2]		do do.
62	John Clement[3]		do do
46	Benjamin Pickard		Miller
55	Frederick Manual		Militia officer, resigned
26	Charles Rolls[4]		Militia officer, in England
76	Joseph Anderson		
58	Joshua Ferris		
57	John Curtin	Infirm	
51	George Husen		
21	John Husen	Infirm	
62	John Bone Sen	do.	
40	John Bone		In the pillory
62	Ezekiel Cudney		
57	George Lawrence[5]		Capt militia resigned
52	Robert Donaldson	Infirm	
48	James Clement[6]		Militia officer, resigned
22	John Thompson	Infirm	
61	Robert Thompson	do.	
63	Amos McKinney		
55	Marlow Riley	Infirm	
53	Jesse Loder	do.	
50	John Ball		Magistrate
64	John Stiver		
69	Castle Corus[7]		
60	Michael Bellinger		
54	Samuel Parks		Armourer
56	Garret Slingerland	Infirm	
54	John Secord	Deaf	
71	Johnathan Lawrence		
60	John Hays	Infirm	
58	John Wolman	do	
46	Josiah Corbin	do.	

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[1] Died December, 1812
[2] Killed in action 21 November, 1812
[3] Died 1845, aged 87
[4] Died 1867, aged 82
[5] Died 1848, aged 91.
[6] Died March, 1813, aged 49
[7] Died 1835, aged 96

The termination of the armistice by the government of the United States was announced by General Brock in a forceful district general order

Fort George Sept 8th, 1812

D G O

Major General Brock was disposed to view the armistice as the forerunner of a restoration of peace and amity with the United States The pretexts on which their declaration of war was chiefly founded having been removed by the British Government and an opening offered by it to an adjustment of all difficulties of minor importance between the two countries But in vain has Great Britain thus held out the hand of conciliation It has been rejected The President of the United States having thought fit to direct their troops to resort again to active warfare and what motive can exist for his authorizing a renewal of hostilities at the same time too (as is confidently asserted) that he has sent an ambassador to England to treat for peace

Is it to facilitate its attainment that he by his own voluntary act places the two countries in a situation to inflict mutually the horrors of war thereby to have their minds the more embittered toward each other? Perhaps indeed he may imagine that by conquest on the side of Canada he can idemnify the United States for the loss to which they were exposed on the Atlantic side from the superiority of the naval power of Great Britain and that with a portion of her provinces in their possession more favorable terms would be obtained in a negotiation for peace but the militia of this province have too just and manly a sense of what they owe to their own personal dignity and independence to be disposed of at the will of the chief magistrate of any foreign country They will not sink to the degradation of unresistingly becoming a make weight to be thrown by his hand into the scale—such baseness belongs not to them They have already offered to the world an instance of what can be effected by the aid of their loyalty and valour and Major General Brock relies with confidence on the continued exertion of these enobling qualities for defeating any design on this province and for contributing no less honorably for themselves than usefully to their families to their King, and their country towards bringing the contest in which the implacable enmity of the American Government has engaged us to a favorable issue By order,

Thos Evans
B M

D G O

Major Genl Brock commanding will inspect the barracks occupied by the militia in this garrison in the course of to-morrow.

By order,

Thos Evans,

B M.

(Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, 1812)

The reluctance of many of the recent immigrants to perform military duty is shown by the following letter from the commanding officer of the second regiment of Lincoln militia.

FROM LIEUT COLONEL THOMAS CLARK TO CAPTAIN CHARLES ASKIN

Chippawa, September 24th 1812

Sir,

I wrote you on the 8th of this month that 40 of the men attached to your company had not attended at this place to be inspected & take the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act Some of these however have since attended at this place and taken the oath. Those of the inclosed list I have neither seen nor heard of You will therefore see that they and each of them immediately take & subscribe before some magistrate the oath of allegiance as directed in the last militia act and according to the militia General Order to that effect & so soon as possible afterwards report to me accordingly and be particular if any there be who may refuse to take the oath

I am Sir

your very obedt servt

Thomas Clark Lt -Col

2nd Lincoln Militia

To Capt Charles Askin
or officer commanding
company of militia at
Canberry & Lower Haldimand

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers, 1812)

An unpublished letter from Sir George Prevost to General Brock demonstrates his earnest desire to avoid further hostilities by refraining carefully from all offensive operations

Head Quarters Montreal
30th September 1812

Sir,

I have been honored with your letter of the 18th inst Having received information that the revocation of the Orders in Council the conciliatory disposition shown by His Majesty's Government towards the United States, and the knowledge of the pacific advances made have produced throughout America the best effects upon the public opinion so as to render the war extremely unpopular I should consider it extremely unfortunate if any temptation or provocation should induce you to abandon those defensive operations suited to the present state of the contest and which it has become both prudent and politic to persevere in observing

I can derive no satisfaction from any result that may attend Captain Muir's movement against Fort Wayne however favorable to our arms as it does not accord with my instructions to you founded upon those I have received from the King's Ministers and is moreover not calculated upon the present military resources of this command

I supposed an extreme case when I desired a co-operation from the forces in Upper Canada such as the evacuation of Montreal and the King's troops falling back upon Quebec before an overwhelming force It is in that event a combination of movement upon Lower Canada with your disposable force may have the effect I then mentioned

A very unpleasant report has reached my ear of want of decision and energy in the conduct of Major Heathcote commanding the Newfoundland Fencibles upon a late occasion when the detachment under his orders was attacked near Prescott It may be proper to institute an inquiry into the circumstances of that affair and if misconduct is established to mark it with reprobation You will therefore give the necessary orders thereon to Colonel Vincent

I shall not fail in communicating to Sir John Warren (our appointed negotiator with the United States), the sentiments you entertain respecting the Indians but I cannot disguise from you that it is my opinion that the present policy of Great Britain being earnestly to get rid of the difficulties occasioned by the war with America little disposition will be manifested to espouse with warmth the cause of our Indian allies I may be mistaken but Sir John must be requested to transmit to the Secretary of State the memorial sent him which had been presented to me by the Montreal merchants. You must therefore avoid committing our Government either by promise or treaty but on the contrary restrain and control their measures so as to prevent that irritation in the United States which may render their very name an insurmountable obstacle to future arrangements in their behalf.

I have complied with your request with regard to the advance of £5,000 to the Receiver General of Upper Canada for the civil expenditure of that province and as I understand from Lieutenant Colonel Nichol that he is to be furnished with a letter of credit from the Receiver General to enable him to make the purchases of the necessaries you want.[1] I have directed the Commissary General to advance to Lieutenant Colonel Nichol to the amount of £5,000 should he require it on the account of the Receiver General, should he require less than that amount the balance will be transmitted by him in army bills to the Receiver General, Colonel Vincent having also signified to me the necessity of furnishing Mr. Ross the Commissary at Kingston with £4,000 for the subsistence of the militia and paying the fresh beef contractors for Kingston, Leeds and Cornwall, and other expenses of those districts. I have directed that amount in army bills to be sent to him and Lieut. Colonel Nichol will take charge of them. The Receiver General will of course forward to the Commissary General his receipt for the £5,000 including as a part thereof whatever amount Lieutenant Colonel Nichol shall have received on his account.

(Dominion Archives, C 1218, pp. 443-445.)

A short letter from Colonel Claus, evidently written in much haste, unaddressed and misdated, giving an inaccurate account of the capture of two British ships at anchor near Fort Erie, has been preserved.

Fort George, 8th Oct. 1812.

Dr. Sir,

On the 14th Ultmo. Col. Elliott with Captain McKee & about 600 Indians left Amherstburg on an Expedition against Fort Wayne on the head of one of the branches of the Miami & was to be followed by Captain Muir with about 300 of the 41st Regt. and Militia. The enclosed copy of Col. Elliot's letter to me of the 3rd Instant which I send this day will shew you the failure of the expedition.

On the night of the 9 Inst. a number of boats from Buffalo Creek made a circuit in the Lake & drop[p]ed down to Fort Erie & cut adrift the brig Detroit & sc[h]ooner

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[1] Blankets, clothing and camp equipage for the militia on duty.

Caledonia, N W vessel—the former drifted on the point of an Island opposite to some of our batteries—the other on the Black Rock where she sunk as low as the water would allow being shot in the hull from our side The Detroit altho' several frustless attempts by us to be got off was set on fire by the Americans & blew up Lieut Roullette a brave young man who commanded the Detroit after loosing both hands was killed I have not been able to learn the true account it must have been a bloody time

(Claus Papers copy by Miss Catherine Claus)

Late in the afternoon of October 13 General Van Rensselaer sent over a flag of truce to make enquiries about wounded officers and soldiers and this was followed by a written message proposing to send over surgeons to attend them and proposing an armistice for three days General Sheaffe suggested in reply that all wounded prisoners should be removed across the river on condition of their not serving again until properly exchanged and agreed to a cessation of firing for three days In a second letter written next day he proposed a partial exchange of prisoners and that the militia captured at Queenston excluding those who might be exchanged 'shall be restored to their homes and families under an engagement not to serve against Great Britain or her allies during the war or until regularly exchanged "

Van Rensselaer readily assented to this proposal and sent an officer to make suitable arrangements which were completed on October 15 Next day General Sheaffe proposed an extension of the armistice until the exchange of prisoners could be completed and General Brock buried His opponent cordially agreed to extend the armistice to October 19 and announced that he had given orders for firing salutes for Brock's funeral at Lewiston and Fort Niagara that afternoon This correspondence had been conducted on both sides with much politeness On the same day Van Rensselaer turned over the command of his troops to General Alexander Smyth of the United States army who adopted a different tone in the interchange of letters

FROM BRIG GEN SMYTH TO MAJOR GEN SHEAFFE

Head Quarters Lewiston 17th Oct , 1812

Sir

A letter addressed by you to Major Gen V Rensselaer has been put into my hands wherein you propose to exchange a Lieut of militia and a private for an Indian savage taken a prisoner by our troops

I regret receiving from you a proposition to which I cannot accede.

(Dominion Archives, C 688 B, p. 135.)

General Sheaffe lost no time in replying at considerable length.

FROM MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE TO BRIG.-GENERAL SMYTH (Draft)

Fort George, 17th Oct., 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your note of this date and regret that I have made a proposition to you that you find it necessary to reject, especially as it was made at the particular request of B. General Wadsworth. As that has failed I presume that the prior agreement respecting the Indian in question which was entered into by Colonel Winder still retains its force, and that the Indian will be sent back to-morrow. Not yet having heard of the return of the prisoners who were to have been sent over from Buffalo or Black Rock early this morning according to the assurance given by Col. Winder and for whom prisoners have already been sent as an exchange I request if they have been intentionally detained that you will be pleased to inform me of the cause.

Mr. Hamilton who has been some time detained at Buffalo has brothers and other near relations in this vicinity who have heard some accounts of the state of his health by which they are much alarmed. I therefore permit one of his brothers to go over with a flag to Buffalo to obtain some information of him and I beg leave to propose that Mr. Hamilton shall be allowed to join his friends, an officer of a rank that may be deemed equivalent being released from his parole in exchange for him.

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B, 133-4.)

Brig. General Wadsworth, who was still a prisoner of war, then applied for the liberation, on their paroles, of two officers of the regular army of the United States, who had not been included in the original agreement, which related only to officers of the militia, and Sheaffe readily assented.

FROM BRIG GENERAL WADSWORTH TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHEAFFE

Newark, Oct 17, 1812

Sir,

Major J R Mullany and Capt Peter Ogilvie, Jun, have familys and are not in the most pleasant condition to leave

I shall receive it as a great favor if you will permit them to return on parole

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B p 136)

The draft of a second letter from Sheaffe to Smyth has been preserved, which may refer to this proposal

17th Oct [1812]

I have the honor of forwarding a note addressed to you which B G W [adsworth] has delivered to me I avail myself of the opportunity to request that I may be informed at what time I may expect the prisoners in your power at Lewiston and Buffalo to be sent over and if anything yet remains to be done on my part to accelerate the execution of the agreement for their exchange

(Dominion Archives C. 688 A p 192)

Smyth's reply to these letters was framed in a decidedly aggressive spirit

FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL SMYTH TO MAJOR GENERAL SHEAFFE

Head Quarters of the Army of the Centre,
Camp near Lewiston 18 Oct 1812

Sir,

Your letter dated yesterday I have this moment had the honor to receive

In the agreement respecting the exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder & Major Evans there is nothing said of the Indian Chief But any verbal agreement entered into by Colonel Winder will be fulfilled

Colo Winder address'd a note to Genl V Rensselaer stating that you estimated the Indian chief as equal to a militia major and requesting instructions

I propose to exchange the indian chief for the 24 men, 7 women, 6 children taken at Chicago or such of them as were not butchered.

The prisoners at Buffalo have not been intentionally detained. The transfer of command has prevented the order being given for their release. It shall be immediately given.

The conduct of Mr. Hamilton, particularly in attempting to cross to Canada by night and alone, would perhaps justify us in treating him as a spy. But willing to proceed in a liberal manner I accept your proposition for his Exchange. The delicacy of his situation and the importance of his connexion will justify me in estimating him equal to a captain of regular troops.

For the master-commandant of the Detroit alias Adams, I expect a captain of regulars in exchange. I think he ranks so by your regulations. For Mr. Carr[1] Lt. of Marines & Mr. Molloy you will please to release Lieutenants Totten & Randolph.

I am very sorry that at the moment I am writing this despatch a british prisoner is found exploring the camp, having left his quarters about a mile distant. I have placed him in close confinement.

As I am averse to taking a single life or occasioning a single calamity without an object, I propose a further continuance of the Armistice indefinitely, each party having a right to terminate it, giving thirty hours notice to the other party, the armistice to extend along the frontier from the Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B. pp. 141-143)

A draft of Sheaffe's reply contains several interlineations and erasures, but was sedulously conciliatory.

Fort George, 18th October, 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your communication by Captain King, Assistant Inspector General.

That there was nothing said of the Indian Chief in the agreement for an exchange of prisoners signed by Colonel Winder and Major Evans was owing to a supposition on the part of the latter that the case was already provided for by a special agreement between Colonel Winder and myself, that an Indian was taken prisoner having been mentioned in conversation before those two officers began the discussion of the subject on which they were to treat (and I was so strongly impressed with the idea that the exchange was finally settled that I gave an assurance to his friends that he was to be restored)* With regard to your proposition to exchange the Indian Chief for the men women, and children, or such of them as (were not butchered)** may survive, I infinitely regret, Sir, that it is not in my power to restore them all without conditions In (the transactions to which you allude)** operations against that place, neither the British Govt nor the influence of its officers nor a British force was concerned, or probably your present proposition would be needless I must therefore disclaim (any)* stipulations regarding them but whatever may be in my power towards obtaining the restoration of the survivors to their friends I shall most joyfully do unconnected with the present subject of discussion

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[1] Ensign Thomas Kerr, Royal Newfoundland Regiment, mortally wounded at Frenchtown, River Raisin, 22 January, 1813.

(I cannot admit it as a principle though Mr Hamilton's conduct during his detention may not have been in some respects justifiable yet I conceive that having been provided with a passport his attempt)** There are (particular)* circumstances perhaps in Mr Hamilton's case that (make me desirous of avoiding discussion)** I am not qualified to discuss and as I am anxious for his returning into the bosom of a family that has suff[ere]d so much on his account I am willing to grant more than perhaps ought to be deemed an equivalent for him

The late commander of the Detroit belonging to the provincial marine ranks with us only as a Lieut of the regular troops Mr Molloy's rank is inferior to that of a Lieut but Sir, I am desirous that the opening of a correspondence between us should be marked by a spirit of liberality, conformably with which I propose that for

Mr Hamilton
Comm'r Rolette,
Lt Kerr,

Mr Molloy and the Indian chief should be returned to you two captains of regular troops the two Lieuts you have named and Lt Smith who took the Indian chief and the Mr Smith already offered with him or a major of militia as originally proposed or if you have any substitute to name I beg that you will make it known to me

As my sentiments perfectly accord with those you express in the opening of your proposal for continuing the

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(*) Omitted; (**) Inserted

armistice, I assent to its being prolonged indefinitely, each party having a right to terminate it giving 30 hours previous notice

I am extremely sorry to hear that a british prisoner has been so indisceet as to render himself liable to punishment I hope that he has erred from ignorance and that an enquiry into the case will satisfy you that it was so

(Dominion Archives C 688 B, pp 137-140)

This letter had an immediate mollifying effect and Smyth replied next day

Head Quarters, Camp near Lewiston, Oct 19th, 1812

Sir,

I have received your letter of yesterday and close with all your propositions

You will be pleased to give liberty to Capt Gibson Capt Machesney, Lieutenant Totten, Lieutenant Randolph, Lieut Smith and Mr Smith

The prisoners at this place you will receive to-day & orders have gone by express for the release of those at Buffalo

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B, p 144)

General Sheaffe amended his official account of the battle at Queenston[1] by a short memorandum addressed to the military secretary of Sir George Prevost

Fort George, 18th Octr 1812

Memorandum

In my despatch of the 13tb inst I omitted mentioning my A D C Ensign Coffin I discovered the omission in reading it and I fear that I did not rectify the error It should have been thus "I found the services of Lieut Fowler, 41st Regt &c, &c &c, and of my A D C Ensign Coffin[2] very useful" I beg that the correction may be admitted into the despatch

(Dominion Archives, C 677, p 140)

On the day after the battle of Queenston Heights Charles Askin described the action as well as he could from the information he had then received in a letter to his father

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[1] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II, pp 71 and 73 and Wood, Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, I, pp. 605-608

[2] Afterwards Colonel Nathaniel Coffin, Adjutant-General of Militia for Upper Canada, 1815-1837, Sheaffe's brother-in-law

FROM CHARLES ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara, Wednesday, Octr 14th, 1812.

Dear Father,

Yesterday I am happy to say a great victory was gained by us over the Americans at Queenston but it is a dear bought victory for our ever to be lamented General was killed The action commenced about one hour before daylight and continued till three or four o'clock in the afternoon Early in the day the General received a wound and I believe never spoke a word after When the Americans first came over there were only two companies of the 49th Regt and two or three companies of militia to oppose them In one of the companies of the 49th Wm Robertson went with Mr Robt Grant as volunteers and distinguished himself very much The Americans opened a battery on us and we threw over shells and cannonaded them as much as we could but not to much effect for they continued coming over The militia and 49th being engaged so much were soon much reduced by their killed and wounded When information was given to the General that the Americans were getting on the mountain, he immediately ordered Col McDonnell to collect what men he counld find [and] oppose them for at this time the 49th and militia were in different parties About 40 men were collected They ran up the mountain and found about two or three hundred of the American regulars there well formed Wm R[obertson] who was at the head of the 40 men ran forward and hollowed out to the Americans "Now we will be at you!" But the Americans immediately fired at them and obliged our men to retire down the hill We had a battery half way up the mountain which was but weakly guarded The General was there and was obliged to leave it and the Americans took possession of it It was soon after this that the General got the wound which killed him The Americans had possession of part of Queenston for some time and kept it as well as the battery and were busy bringing over their men as fast as they could, till reinforcements from this place and Chippawa of the 41st, militia, and Indians, formed as I understand on the mountain, and attacked them so vigorously that they ran down the mountain as fast as they could and made for the river to get over and some attempted to swim When the American General on the other side seeing what a perilous situation they were in, sent over a flag of truce and they all surrendered prisoners of war They were all marched down to this place and got here about sundown They came over to breakfast on this side but I believe it was a day of fasting with them There are about six hundred men taken and nearly fifty officers One company of riflemen had made their way into the woods & remained there all night. We heard this morning that the Indians were after them and a party of the 41st & militia are sent this morn[in]g to protect them, what I must say they hardly deserve. Had they not surrendered yesterday, they would have all been driven into the river for they fled before our men, the grenadiers of the 41st who were anxious to retrieve their character, were very anxious to charge them, but they ran before them so fast that they never could get up to them and went down what you might almost call precipices to get out of the way of our men. What number of our men were lost I cannot say but there are few considering the time they were engaged. I think we have lost about sixty men and only one officer which was poor General Brock. Col. McDonnell is dangerously wounded and several officers of the 49th are wounded but not badly. The Americans I think must have lost more than a hundred and I am told several of their officers were killed, at least six or seven. Among those taken is General Wadsworth, Cols. Allen, Van Ranselaer, & Scott and some other Col.

When the Americans were first coming over about 80 who were in a scow were so galled by the fire from a few of the 49th Regt that they begged for quarter and were taken prisoners. I saw a great many of the prisoners one half of whom are militia, these were anxious to know and were in hopes of being allowed to go home as the militia taken at Detroit [were], but when they were told they would have to go to Quebec they were not very well pleased. Had they had an idea of it there are not many of them would have put their foot on this shore. I regret much that I could not share in the honor of the victory. After my arrival at Queenston I was confined to bed with boils and was two days that I could not get up to my meals nor could I hardly sit up in bed for the worst of the boils and the last broke the day before they came over. I was laying at George Hamilton's when we were first attacked and went from that to Robert's as well as I could, there I remained about an hour but finding the Americans were gaining ground, I thought that as I could not run, that I should get out of their way if I could & went to a village about 2½ miles back[1] and from that I came down here to get arms for some men that were there.

I have not time to write more & paper is so scarce that I can hardly get a sheet. This I had to beg.

The two flank companies of the Newfoundland Fencibles are on their way to Amherstburg. I think there are nearly two hundred of them.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers, 1812)

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[1] St. Davids.

On the day of General Brock's funeral Charles Askin wrote a short letter to his father

Niagara 16th Octr 1812
Friday 3 o'Clock P.M.

Dear Father

I wrote you two days ago giving you an account of an action which was fought at Queenston on Tuesday last, in which engagement we were Victorious, but when I wrote you I did not know the great advantage we had gained over the Enemy. we have took on that day nearly eight hundred prisoners sixty five of whom are officers and we killed and drowned I think about two hundred more. we took one of their standards also and a six pounder it would have been a great Victory had we not lost our Gallant General Brock, who was killed when animating the 49th Regt. and desiring them to charge the Enemy who had just then taken our Battery on the Mountain. soon after the General was killed his Aid de Camp Col. McDonnell received a wound of which he died two days after. he was a very promising young man—both him and the poor General were just now interred. the procession was grand. The Indians formed a part of it—

We have had a Cessation of Hostilities for three days by Agreement, it terminates in about an hour—but I hardly think we will be attacked for some days, though they have a very large force on the other side. I am told that many of those who came over were drove into the boats at the Point of the Bayonet. I think that their comrades will be more unwilling to come over now

My love to my Dear Mother Brothers & Sisters if you please

(Askin Papers, Burton Historical Library, Detroit)

"Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813," printed at Halifax in 1815 by John Howe, Junior,[1] has become a very rare book. Its dedication to "the People of Canada." is subscribed "An Acadian." It contains the following versified account of the battle at Queenston

"But soon the veteran band, these wilds forsake
And speed their way down bright Erie's lake,
For there, another army brav'd the shore
That in conjunction, might have mov'd before
But these rare Generals, every one are free,
Go where they like, not where they ought to be

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[1] Probably a brother of Hon. Joseph Howe.

Over Niagara's flood this chose to go,
Where he expected but a slender foe;
Two moons had fill'd their horns while slow he paus'd,
Canadia's infant shot some terror caus'd,
They were deceiv'd, thinking her baby frame
Would fall with fear—e'en at a Yankee's name,
But finding more mature, her nerves and strength,
Cautious he stood—then on advanced at length
To where the narrows, trace the opposing shore,
And they could see that nothing stood before;
Brock was not there—they were in perfect plight
To land and take the little town that night,
Their chief Van Rennsselear—a rugged name,
In story large, and lengthy as his fame;
Why fam'd I hear you say? ay! why indeed,
Except, for merit to obtain the meed
Long ere so beautiful a wreath was due—
Or else, as wreaths are scarce, to steal a few
Be as it may—he cross'd at dead of night
When the young moon show'd half her borrow'd light
Before they left the shore, a deep blood red,
Glow'd o'er her face, with streaks of darkness spread;
Thus pensively she cast a feeble light,
O'er a long field with falchions gleaming bright;
There the invaders stood, and heard around
On every side the cataract's mighty sound
They paus'd and listen'd not from any fear,
'Twas but the cataract—not drums they hear;
And on the General led his phalanx strong
Like midnight murder, mov'd he slow along.

But as they gain'd the border of the flood,
Somewhat refractory his army stood,
All would not cross, intreaties, threats were vain,
Down on the rocks they sit—and there remain
To learn what fortune those advancing found
And go, if victory their efforts crown'd.
Another evil ek'd out their delay,
Fifteen longboats, with oars, had gone astray;
But this they remedy, then ply the oar,
And reach Canadia's silent, sleeping shore

The watchful sentinel the town alarms;
Quick the responsive drummer beat to arms
Canadia's General—like a ray of light,
A splendid meteor on the brown of night,
Advanc'd along, 'ere day began to dawn,
Or from his lair had sprung the sleeping fawn

Surpris'd, the foe beheld him lead his band
And on the margin of the river stand
No power was left to fly—for, on the shore,
One half were landing—and the rest were o'er,
Near where the whirlpool agitates the flood
Frowning with scorn the British heroes stood,
And on the foes advance their vollies pour,
Tracking with blood the till then hallow'd shore;
Yet on the invaders came tho' Brock withstood,
Their force with bayonets deep dy'd in blood,
The treble number'd foe push'd on with zeal
And made Brock's bright and glittering rampart reel,
And now conceive—while carnage mark'd the strand,
And drench'd with blood Canadia's hallow'd land;
Conceive a patriot breast with ardor fir'd
His firm strong nerves with energy inspir'd,
A Briton panting for his country's fame
Anxious to strengthen her renowned name
Yet here in bondage held, in galling chains,
A mere spectator of the scene remains,
Where hated enemies with pride rejoice
And rage must smother the resentful voice

How in the conflict did his heart rebound
How tremble at the shouts that rang around,
'Till victory to her son the laurel bore,
To Brock the hero of Niagara's shore,
Who made the fury of the battle's bray
Out-roar the cataract's resistless way,
A pause ensued, the voice of war was still,
The victor's tramp was silent on the hill,
When slow and solemn came the heavy sound
That Brock was struggling with a mortal wound
The field he kept—'till all his foes had fled,
Then smiling death's cold mantle round him spread
The ground that just before wept blood for tears,
Now wet with sorrow's drops forlorn appears,
The Indians laid their warlike belts aside
Their strings of wampum—and their martial pride
Near the pale corse these varied trophies lay
To tell their strength and pride had pass'd away
Silent they stood and gaz'd upon the bier,
But heav'd no sigh, nor dropp'd one friendly tear
Renowned Chief—joy rest with thy remains
Virtue's bright current fill'd thy manly veins

Where could more glory dignify his name
Engrave him deeper on the lists of fame,

He fell repelling the invaders' might
Restoring to the hind his ravish d right,
In honor s cause his noble spirit fled
And her escutcheon glitters o er his head

Say gallant shade as thy last blood distill d
In sacred drops and yon rough bason fill d,
Say could thy pillow be more grand and dread?
Or more sublime thy winding sheet be spread?
Than there, where nature all her power combines,
To grace a canopy where fame reclines,
Niagara s shore whose far resounding flood
Tinges its foam with thy respected blood,
Whose hurried cataract and wave sublime,
Laughs at the figure of diminish'd time
Where Iris weeps—and spreads her polished bow
Bedew'd with tears that to thy memory flow

Brock s mausoleum distant worlds shall tell
And paint Niagara where the hero fell
Time spurning flood—when nations are no more
Thou will relate the tragic story o er,
And show that grave beside his on the hill
Where brave Macdonald holds his station still
For as in life—in fortune's hours they sped
So side by side are laid the heroes dead"

"October 1812" Pp 23-27

A memorial from Major James Dennis, prepared by him at the end of the war contains considerable information respecting the battle of Queenston and other operations in which he was engaged not to be found elsewhere

His Honour Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath President Administering the Government of Upper Canada, &c, &c, &c

The Memorial of Brevet Major James Dennis 49th Regiment Major of Brigade to the Forces Quebec

20th March 1815

SHEWETH

That your Memorialist conceiving that a statement of his services in the Canadas & more particularly in Upper Canada might be deemed deserving Your Honors consideration as well as that of the Honourable the Council of that Province,

Humbly intreats your benevolent interest in his prayer and your recommendation that he may Obtain a grant of Land as a gratuity for the same—

Your Memorialist humbly states that he has served nearly Thirteen Years in both Canadas, between four and five years of which period he served in the upper Province, and nearly Two years and Six Months of the latter period, in a scene of Active and harassing Warfare and at a crisis of the late War, very important to the interests of that Country particularly when its very salvation was menaced by the attempts of the Enemy (which under the Direction of Divine Providence were defeated) on the 13th October 1812

That your Memorialist had the honor to Command the Post of Queenston for some weeks before, at the actual period when and for some time after it was attacked by General Van Rancelar and the Americans, numerically triple in force by the firmness, Zeal, and intrepidity of a few Royal and Militia Artillery, the Flankers of the 49th Regiment aided by the Gallantry and Devotion of Captains Hatts, Chisholms, & Durands Companies of Militia, who rivalled the regulars in good conduct, had the good fortune to maintain his position in spite of every effort essayed by an overwhelming force of the Enemy and previous to the arrival of the ever to be regretted Major General Sir Isaac Brock who (on the ground) was pleased to applaud Memorialists arrangement for the Defence and the conduct of the Troops in repelling the attack and Maintaining the Post of Queenston to a few moments before his lamented fate. Major General Sir Isaack Brock was unaccompanied on his first arrival having dispatched his Aide de Camps to Hurry on the reinforcements which could be spared from Fort George, and who afterwards (combined with those remaining of Mem lists Command) for Mem'list again succeeded to it after our beloved general fell) and also by the intrepid conduct of the increased Number of Militia with the Indians Achieved in the after part of the day a glorious Victory, the firm foundation for which was laid by the panic struck in the Enemy by nearly four hours constant and severe fighting against their superior Numbers from a quarter before four oClock on that memorable morning when the Troops under your Memorialists command distroyed between 300 and 400 of the Enemy, took and sunk five large Batteaux and a large scow (called the Wasp of Oswego) and also took 97 Prisoners all before an Individual arrived to their Assistance, and Memorialist presumes to be thus minute in detailing the Services of the Troops under his Command on that day that he may do them the Justice they deserve and that recapitulating their Efforts under your

Memorialists direction may be considered as an Humble plea for attention to the Object of his prayer [1]

Memorialist had also the honor of being in the Actions of Newark on the 27th of May and in that of Stoney Creek the 6th June following (1813) in each of which he had a horse shot under him, and Memorialist further had the honor of serving in several skirmishes with the Enemy while holding a command at the Cross roads on the position circumscribing the enemy when in possession of Fort George particularly one Sunday when field officer on duty, he rallied the troops and indians retiring from the position of the advanced picquet which a superior force of the American Indians and rifle men had obtained the possession of and with charged bayonets routed the enemy and reoccupied an Advanced position Memorialist had also the good fortune to repell a Second attack in the Ev'g of the same day which the enemy made on our Piequets (with about 600 Indians & rifle men) for the purpose of inforcing a reconnaissance of our position at the Cross roads Memorialist had the honor to receive Major General Stewart's (then Col Stewart of the 1st Royals) thanks in the presence of Major General De Rottenburgh Major General Vincent and Lt Colonel Harvey Dy Adjutant General for the performance of his duty on that Sunday, (Col Stewart then Com'g the Post) Your Memorialist, during his services in the Country has commanded at the following Posts at St Johns & Dependencies (lower Canada) York for a short period during the absence of Lt Col Sheaffe Fort Erie 15 months (during peace) Fort George Queenston, Chippawa, St Davids 20 Mile Creek the latter Command the advance of the Centre Division by order of Major General Vincent, at the recommendation of Lt Col Harvey Dy Adjt General

Memorialist also commanded a corps of observation at Cornwall the Stores at which Post with 12 Batteaux laden with provisions & Stores for Kingston he was fortunate in withdrawing from the plunder of the force under the Command of the American Genl Wilkinson when he descended the St Lawrence in Novr 1813 Memorialist with an Unorganized ill found though high spirited and gallant Militia about 300 in Number took up a position (having distroyed the Bridge) near Hooples Creek in advance of Cornwall and engaged & for an hour and a half kept in check

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[1] A sketch of the battle of Queenston, made by Major Dennis was reproduced in Volume VI of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society, p 76 redrawn it is stated from a vignette on a small map of Upper Canada published by O G Steele, No 206 Main Street Buffalo, N Y, in 1820

(the day before the Battle of Chryslers) the advance Column General Wilkinsons Force thereby (as he has since been informed by American Officers & which a reference to Genl Wilkinsons dispatch will Confirm) preventing General Wilkinson from sending assistance from his centre Column where he was himself—to reinforce the troops engaged next day with our Army at Chryslers as he was uncertain at which Point assistance Might be More Necessary—Memorialist although having but one Sergt and Private of his Own Regt and whom he was obliged to give up to the security of the Ammunition continued to Shew a fire from the different parts of the bush along the creek and created temporary respect from the enemy by a fallacious display of force that it induced slowness in his advance altho Amounting (at that Creek) to 1500 Inf'y & 200 dragoons with 3 Field Pieces which placing in position they attempted to dislodge us whenever fire was given and which after discovering the finesse they in course, succeeded in, it becoming an unwarrantable temerity to continue a contest on such unequal terms and which could only terminate with capture and slaughter of the peasantry of the Country, without Effecting any profitable end a Night march of this same body of Militia in a few days after (Combined with the approach of our troops after the Victory won at Chryslers) induced the precipitate departure of the whole American Force from Our territory.

Memorialist trusts the faithful display of his services will not induce the reflection that he is wanting in that modesty so commendable in the Military character that it is a fair effort to strengthen the picture for the sole faultless purpose of gaining attention towards his prayer, and memorialist trusts it will not diminish his claim to express that the gentlemen and peasantry on the Niagara Frontier as well as those of Glengary & Dundas, will bear sufficient testimony to the veracity of the particular services herein stated.

Memorialist humbly adds that during his services in upper Canada he was twice wounded once at Queenston, and again at Stoney Creek, and never was an hour absent from his duties while serving for nearly 13 years in the Canadas

This statement taken into your honours gracious consideration and obtaining your recommendation for the grant of land solicited being bestowed will impress with strong feelings of gratitude Your Memorialist & devoted, Obedient

& faithful

Humble Servant

J Dennis[1] B Major 49th Regt

Brigade Major to the Forces.

(Sundries Upper Canada, 1815)

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[1] Afterwards Major General Sir James Dennis, K C B

Expectations of an immediate renewal of hostilities caused an urgent call for reinforcements to the militia on active duty This was embodied in a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Clark to Charles Askin

Chippawa Octr 23d, 1812

Sir,

The company of militia at Canberry & lower Haldimand of which you are captain being attached to the 2nd Lincoln Regiment under my command, I have now to order that you immediately march down here every man under your command as quick as possible On their arrival here they will receive arms and ammunition

(Dominion Archives Askin Papers)

A letter from General Sheaffe to the Military Secretary shows that the exchange of officers was productive of some information of considerable importance

Fort George 25th Octr, 1812

Sir

I transmit herewith some intelligence recently obtained That from Lieutenant Rolette is interesting as it relates to the designs of the enemy on our vessels on the lakes and the means for executing them L Colonel Myers sends to Colonel MacDonnell Lieutenant Rolette's report of the capture of the Detroit and other information relative to the Marine Department

(Dominion Archives, C 677 p 143)

As soon as the death of General Brock became known at York the resident members of the Executive Council were hastily assembled and the clerk was instructed to inform General Sheaffe that in succeeding him in the military command he had also become administrator of the civil affairs of the province This was done in a letter from Mr John Small in the following terms

"As soon as intelligence was received of the death of the late President, General Brock the Executive Council assembled on the summons of the Chief Justice and I am directed to transmit to you, Sir as succeeding to the command of His Majesty's Forces in this Province the enclosed copy of the additional royal instructions of 13th July 1811, and to apprise you that the civil government must remain unprovided until you are sworn a member of the Executive Council"

(Dominion Archives C. 688 B, p 129)

The opportune extension of the armistice enabled Sheaffe to comply with very little delay. He announced this fact in a letter to Sir George Prevost, dated at Fort George on October 19.

"After writing my despatch of yesterday I received a proposition from Brigadier Gen'l Smyth, commanding on the United States frontier, for prolonging the armistice indefinitely, either party having a right to terminate it giving thirty hours notice to the other party, to which I have acceded, as it corresponds with the system adopted on our part, and removes the obstacle of my going over to York—the wind has not permitted the departure of the second (and last) division of the Prisoners—but it seems now inclined to be favorable for it, and they are embarking in the Moira and Simcoe to proceed for Kingston. Lt. Colonel Myers reports on the subject to Colonel McDonell.[3]

"I am informed that Captain Loring[4] of the 104th Regiment (late Lt. of the 49th) has arrived at Montreal. I shall feel much obliged to Your Excellency to permit his joining me, as he came out with the expectation of being appointed my Aide de Camp. If my request cannot be granted I beg leave to recommend him to Your Excellency as well qualified for the staff appointment suitable to his rank should there be a vacancy.

"I this moment learn that the Prince Regent is coming in—I shall embark in her without delay and proceed to York and as I intend sending this despatch from thence by land, I shall close it there.

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

Sheaffe wrote again to Prevost next day from York.

"I arrived here last night and found the Moira and Simcoe here, the wind having forced them to put in.

"The Executive Council assembled to-day and I was sworn in as a Member of it and afterwards as President, which I have communicated to Earl Bathurst in a despatch that accompanies.[5]

"The Vessel that was supposed to be the P[rince] R[egent] proved to be the Royal George, in which I came over. That ship has taken on board the Prisoners that had been sent to this place and with the Moira and Simcoe has just sailed for Kingston. The P[rince] R[egent] arrived here this evening and I shall return to Fort George in that vessel to-morrow "

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[3] Colonel Edward Macdonell, Quartermaster-General.

[4] Captain Robert Roberts Loring, who afterwards became A.D.C. to Sir Gordon Drummond and was taken prisoner at Lundy's Lane.

[5] Printed in "The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812," Part II, pp. 142-143.

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

Early in November 1812 by the advice of the Executive Council, a board of magistrates was appointed by the President to examine persons claiming exemption from military service as citizens of the United States and consequently liable to deportation as alien enemies consisting of the Honourable William Claus, Thomas Dickson, and Joseph Edwards to whom the following instructions were issued

"Instructions from His Honor to the Board appointed at Niagara, for the examination of persons residing in the Niagara, London and Western Districts who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States

"Having thought proper in conformity with the advice of the Executive Council to constitute you or any two of you to be a Board at Niagara to receive and decide upon the pretensions of persons in the Niagara London, and Western Districts, who claim exemption from military service as being subjects of the United States you will therefore receive all such applications and being satisfied that the persons applying are subjects of the United States, you will furnish them with passports to cross the line at such place and in such manner as you may find expedient to direct. Should, however, instances occur in which it may appear to you that very serious injury may arise to such persons being settled and having families in the country, who have not received lands from the Crown or taken the oath of allegiance you may report the same to me especially with your opinion as to the terms of a modified allegiance or security for good conduct on which they may be permitted to remain

"Roger Hale Sheaffe, President"

A form of passport was appended

"The bearer of this (person's name at full length) late resident in (name of District &c) having reported himself to us as a subject of the United States and we being satisfied that he is so, do hereby grant him this passport that he may be passed over to from and quit this Province on or before the day of

"Given under our hands at this day of

"N B A description of the person to whom the passport is given to be inserted at the foot or on the back thereof The passport to be returned to the Board after it has been employed for the purpose for which it was granted"

(Dominion Archives, C. 688 B, pp 155-6)

A letter from Alexander Hamilton afterwards Sheriff of the Niagara district for many years, to Charles Askin contains a sarcastic reference to the short lived newspaper published at Niagara after the demise of the "Guardian."

Dear Charles, 10 Nov, 1812

Your note by Matthew Crooks came to hand yesterday morning but owing to my con[founde]d memory I did not send it with him I now enclose you a Bee of the 31st Oct, which is the last we have that of last week, partaking too deeply of the cup, got drunk and died I also send you a ten dollar association note.[8] Should you want more I can supply you very well being at present pretty flush The Moira Simcoe, and Murney's sloop came in the other day loaded with cloathes for the militia[9] and goods for individuals There is nothing new by them It is said they were to be sent back immediately to Kingston for 2 more companies of the 49th and 1 of the Newfoundland company which would be a great addition to our strength They are so dilatory that the country might be taken & retaken two or three times before they would get back again

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

The armistice was terminated by a letter from General Smyth at Buffalo stating that it would end at nine o'clock on the evening of November 20 This notice was given to the commandant at Fort Erie in the forenoon of November 19, instead of being sent to General Sheaffe at Fort George, yet it was delivered to him at half past eight that evening Next day Alexander Hamilton wrote to Charles Askin at Chippawa

My dear Charles Nia[gara], 20 Nov 1812

Yours of this morning by Mr Nelles has this moment come to hand Respecting the notice given us of the termination of the armistice, it is certainly the case tho' I wonder you don't know it as it came from Fort Erie. Col Clark does not seem to know it either which seems rather strange. We understand we are to open every battery upon them at this place the moment the truce is over. The whole country is in requisition at present drawing charcoal for to heat the shot. The plan is said to be to open every gun, shells, mortars, carcasses, &c., &c., and continue the business until we get their fort in a blaze which, if it should succeed, which will be the means of throwing all their works which are fire proof open to our view. Hamilton Merritt leaves this for Detroit with despatches and money for that place. I have just called at Dr Kerr's for your salts but he has none and does not think there are any in town. Heron's and Baldwin's are the only shops now open. I enclose you two ten dollar notes. As I do not just now want them, they may be as well with you as me. I am happy to hear that the boards &c are mostly down and would be still happier to hear they were well sold. Everybody here are now busy sending off their furniture &c as it is generally believed we shall have it very hot and probably all a flame. I will endeavor to find some salts for you and salve before Mr Nelles returns. Adieu perhaps forever in this world.

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[8] Probably issued by the Niagara and Queenston Association of Merchants formed to support the credit of the provincial government

[9] Purchased at Montreal by Lieut. Colonel Nichol Quartermaster General of Militia. Cf. Sheaffe to Prevost, 8 Novr, 1812, in Documentary History, Vol IV, p 186.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

Later in the day Charles Askin wrote in much the same mood.

Chippawa, Nov. 20th, 1812

Dear Father,

We have notice from the other side that the armistice terminates at 9 o'clock to-night. We doubted it at first but now there is no doubt of it and we expect an attack before to morrow morning. I have given Elizabeth Meredith's miniature and some other things (that came from Archange) to Mrs Macklem of this place to take care of. They are sealed and addressed to you. There is also some papers addressed in the same manner. I send up in a waggon a keg of snuff for my dear mother, which she will give part of to my poor uncle & aunt Barthe. I shall also send up a few yds of bombazet for my aunt and a keg of butter for my mother, which I hope will get to Fort Erie in time to go up in the Lady Prevost. As we are all preparing to meet the enemy I have not time to say more. Please to give my kind love to my dear mother, to James, to Alexr, my sisters, and all my relations & friends.

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

With this letter went another longer one, begun two days earlier but completed the same day

Chippawa 18th Nov., 1812

Dear Father—

Three days ago I wrote to you but did not find an opportunity until to day that I saw Capt Hall of sending the letter the Lady Prevost now laying at Fort Erie will sail from that with the first fair wind I will endeavor to send up 10 lbs Tea, which a man has gone to Queenston for to-day, that it may be up in time for the Vessel the snuff and Keg of butter if in my power shall go at the same time—but as I have been disappointed in get[t]ing the butter which I long since spoke for, I may perhaps not be able to send up the Keg, for being stationed here with my company of Militia I cannot leave this to go where I could get it I am also prevented from sending something to my Uncle Barthe for I cannot get such things as I would wish to send him here for being in daily expectation of an attack, the Merchants have packed up most of their goods

On Friday last an attempt was made by the Americans to take the Royal George then laying at the Ducks near Kingston alone, the Oneida, a Vessel of equal force, and four others were employed for this purpose, but fortunately for us they failed in the attempt, we lost one man killed and three wounded the Royal George cut her Cable and made for Kingston The Simcoe was there on her way down and was chased, but luckily got safe into Kingston The Earl Moira was also on her way down, but not in company with the Simcoe, nothing has been heard of her, but as she left York the day after the Simcoe she had not time to have got to Kingston when the express left The American Vessels are better manned I believe than ours on Lake Ontario and I am afraid unless some British Tars are sent for the enemy will make themselves masters of it I was told that Capt Hall had made application to go for seamen to Quebec but was refused One of the inhabitants of this District, who has been ever since the war on the other side made his escape a few days ago and came over near Queenston in a Boat, he says the Militia have left the lines, but that the enemy have about seven thousand regulars between Niagara & Buffalo I do not think they have so many and if they have we have six thousand to oppose them, and their regulars are not near so well disciplined as our flankers Clothing has lately come for the Militia the Flank Companies get 1 pr pantaloons each, 1 pr shoes or two pr Shoe packs & 1 Jacket Shirts and stockings are provided for them For 3 yds of flannel and thread to make it they have to pay 5/6 N Y C and the stockings which are very good, cost them 4/4 apc Yk, every militiaman is to have a blanket but they are to be return'd

James Hamilton who is stationed with Robert about one mile from this sent down to Queenston to day for Elizabeth Meredith's miniature picture which he brought out with him and left in his trunk there I shall try and send it up to you by Ensign Kerr who appears to be a very careful young man, and who has promised to take charge of it

I have lately seen General Hull's official Dispatch to his Government respecting the surrender of Detroit it is well wrote, and more correct than I should have expected it, although I dare say Mr Brush will swear there is not a word of truth in it when he sees it I see in the same paper that Col Miller who was taken at Detroit, is exchanged for Capt Dacres of the Guerriere I am very sorry I have not been able to get the paper to send it to you. I have wrote to Alex Hamilton to send me from Niagara any papers he can get and expect some from him to-morrow which you shall have if they come I will beg some from Mr Clark for you also I gave you all the news in the letter I wrote you three days ago, as I mean this shall go by land and may perhaps come to hand first I shall just mention the most interesting things Lord Wellington in several engagements with the French had allways been victorious and had destroyed the whole of Marmont's Army Marmont himself had lost his Arm and afterwards died the French lost immense numbers Lord Wellington in one of the battles had got a slight wound with a Sabre He entered Madrid I think some time in August Joseph Bonaparte had made his escape but had not got out of Spain, we have had reports of his being since taken with the last of his followers about 7000 men but this I hardly believe yet know that as we were masters of the North of Spain, he stands a poor chance of getting clear The French have been beat also in some encounters with the Russians and have lost three or four thousand men, this is all I now recollect except that it's said that Sir John Borlase Warren is sent out as Ambassador and is now at Washington we shall soon know if he is or not.

Nov 20 Yesterday we had information here that the Armistice would terminate at 9 o'clock to-night but we are not certain of it I send now to Fort Erie 7½ half yds Bombazet done up in a small bundle covered with Sheeting and addressed to you, this I will thank you to give to my Aunt Barthe with my love.

Please give my love to my Dear Mother, my Brothers & Sisters & respects to my Uncle Barth

(Burton Historical Collection, Askin Papers)

When the privations and sufferings of the militia stationed on the Niagara became known at York the sympathy of the inhabitants was aroused and a meeting was called which resulted in the formation of the "Loyal and Patriotic Society," soon after for their aid and relief The Reverend John Strachan, who took a leading part in its organization, wrote immediately on the subject to his former pupil John Beverley Robinson, who was still on duty with his flank company of the Third York regiment

Nov 22, 1812

My dear John,

In consequence of a hint in the letters of Mr G Ridout and Mr Robert Stanton to their respective fathers, the gentlemen of York met to day in the church for the purpose of subscribing towards the comforts of the militia belonging to this district on actual service, especially the flank companies

Our subscription though not yet paid amounts to £150 and we wish your and Captain Heward's advice how to dispose of it for the most advantage of the men Your brother, Captain [Peter] Robinson, thinks that the captains of the York militia should make a requisition upon the Quartermaster General for flannel sufficient to make two shirts for every man that wants them and thread &c, to make them up together with a pair of stockings for each and we will supply the captains with the amount If there is any difficulty in making them up we can get it done here instantly The militia will be much pleased when they know with what alacrity the subscription proceeded

To Lieut John B Robinson, Brown's Point by Niagara

The appearance of a dominating hostile squadron of ships on Lake Ontario in November caused serious alarm An emergency meeting of the Executive Council was held to discuss the situation It was clearly seen that the safety of the seat of government as well as the Niagara Peninsula and the western part of the Province, was dependent upon the maintenance of naval superiority on that lake An address to General Sheaffe on the subject was adopted unanimously and signed by the Chief Justice as chairman.

"We trust that Your Honour will believe that the following observations proceed from the purest motives which we as a Committee of the Executive Council do now submit to your consideration.

"We rejoice with our fellow subjects at the success which has hitherto attended His Majesty's arms, but while reflecting with pleasure on the past we cannot conceal our anxiety for the future.

"By land our success has exceeded our hopes, not so is our warfare on the lakes. Whether this is to be attributed to inferiority of strength on our part, to accident, which the wisest and bravest can neither foresee nor prevent, or to the inexperience of our naval commanders, we presume not even to hint at an opinion.

"But altho' our hopes have in some instances been disappointed nothing has as yet taken place to lead us to despair, much to excite our active exertions. If faith is to be given to report and that not slightly founded our enemies are using every effort to strengthen their marine on the lakes. At this moment it is said they are building a vessel superior in force to any that has yet appeared on Lake Ontario. The consequences that will necessarily follow from the command of the lakes being in the power of the United States would be distressing in the extreme to this province.

"We speak from the strongest conviction, we believe it would be fatal.

"But it is the farthest from our thoughts officiously to interfere with such measures as may be deemed expedient by those entrusted with command. We only as subjects and as men who have everything that is valuable and dear to them at stake, offer our feeble aid by stating with the greatest deference and respect to Your Honour as President of that Board to which we belong, our unanimous and solemn opinion, 'that to strengthen our marine on the lakes is absolutely necessary under existing circumstances for the defence and preservation of this Province'."

"Novr 17th 1812 Thomas Scott Chairman."

(Dominion Archives C. 728, pp 113-4)

This address was sent at once to General Sheaffe, who replied a week later from his headquarters at Fort George, where his attention was engaged by the recent resumption of active hostilities.

"Your address is before me The subject of it is of vital importance to this Province It has therefore an imperious claim to the attention of those who are guardians of the public welfare As such in making this representation you have performed one of the most essential duties which your public character imposed on you

"The state of our Provincial Marine and the necessity for its improvement and augmentation are known to his Excellency the Commander of the Forces and have been the subject of communication to His Majesty's Ministers to whom it has been recommended to employ officers and seamen of the Royal Navy on the lakes and as it has become evident that immediate exertions are necessary without waiting for distant aid I have no doubt that every effort will be made without delay to bring forward the resources which the British Provinces can furnish for counteracting the exertions and designs of the enemy in aid of which I am endeavoring to collect information from every part of this Province of persons who can be procured to assist in building or navigating vessels and of the materials and stores that can be furnished for their construction and equipment

"You truly observe Gentlemen, that nothing has yet taken place to lead us to despair We have hitherto waged a successful war, and with means that might have been justly deemed inadequate to the task which they accomplished Providence has been on our side. Let us look with humble confidence to its continued aid I transmit to His Excellency the Governor in Chief a copy of your address"[1]

(Dominion Archives, Sundries, Upper Canada, 1812)

Sir George Prevost had already given the subject serious attention as Sheaffe knew, but his means were limited and he was dependent mainly on assistance from distant sources

On the first day of January, 1813, he replied from Quebec in as satisfying terms as he felt justified in employing to Sheaffe's appeal

"I have received your letter of the 16th of last month containing a report of Captain Gray's arrival at Fort George and Lieutenant Colonel Myers being detained there by indisposition.[1] My despatches to you of the 23rd November and of the 15th and 19th December will have made you acquainted with the resources I have been enabled to draw from Lower Canada for aiding in the execution of the plan which is proposed for the improvement of the Marine establishment in Upper Canada to such an extent as shall at least raise it to an equality with the enemy. By a reference to them you will perceive that I was duly sensible that assistance of an essential kind was to be drawn only from a source over which I am without control, and in consequence early application was made from me to the Government and the Admiral in command of the ships on the American station. I have every reason to believe our wants will be attended to from both quarters, and with a promptitude calculated to add vigor to the exertions we are making for the preservation of the Province entrusted to your immediate defence. I agree with you in opinion that the construction of gunboats must become a secondary consideration. The general sketch of the plan proposed to be submitted to me by Lieutenant Colonel Myers respecting the increased establishment of the navy did not accompany the letter in which it is mentioned but as you are armed with such full authority on that subject I trust nothing impedes its progress. The arrival of Mr Plucknett[2] with one hundred and twenty ship carpenters and thirty seamen at Kingston, the departure under proper escorts of one hundred sledges laden with marine and ordnance stores from Montreal for Upper Canada, the assurance of receiving marine supplies from Halifax as early in the year as possible together with a proportion of naval officers and seamen all these circumstances will convince the gentlemen of your Executive Council that I am duly impressed with the necessity of strengthening our naval force on the lakes and at the same time as they are made acquainted by you with the measures in operation for their support you may assure your Council that I will fail in nothing that is within my ability for seconding their loyal and gallant disposition to defend and preserve entire the valuable province of Upper Canada.

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[1] See his letter to Sir George Prevost, 23rd Novr., 1812, in Documentary History, 1812, Part II, pp. 229-230.

"Mr Freer[3] will have made known to you the preparations which are making for the comfortable clothing of your militia. I regret that the total want of scarlet cloth has compelled me to consent to green being made use of for the purpose When the militia are clothed and paid the laws under which they were incorporated seem to me sufficient to enable you to establish for their government a system of discipline which may render that force very efficient against an American army

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[1] Myers and Gray were the officers of the Quartermaster General's Department who were then employed in superintending the construction of ships of war on Lakes Erie and Ontario.

[2] Thomas J Plucknett appointed storekeeper and superintendent of the dockyard at Kingston.

[3] His military secretary.

"I shall be glad to hear the result of your enquiry respecting Captain King[1] but without some decisive proof shall be brought against him to establish his being a British subject, you will of course release him agreeably to the convention entered into between General Dearborn and myself for an exchange of prisoners, a copy of which I have directed Mr Freer to furnish to you

'Since writing the above I have seen General Smyth's official account of the late attempt to invade Upper Canada[2] and Mr Porter's comments upon it[3] From my perusal of them my apprehensions for the safety of the province are considerably diminished Such a force cannot be considered as formidable and the force opposed to you as well as the officers commanding it are by their own confession of such a description as cannot but inspire you with the fullest confidence as to the result of any future attempt they may make against you

"Mr Dickson[4] whose influence among the Western Indians is very extensive has lately made a proposal to me for a co-operation with them for the defence of Upper Canada I have submitted the same to a board at Montreal of whom Major General de Rottenburg is the head and I have reason to think I shall despatch Mr Dickson to you for the purpose of accomplishing this object"

(Dominion Archives C 1220 pp 82-84)

Freer's letter to Sheaffe dated at Quebec next day read

"I avail myself of the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres for Upper Canada to enclose to you an extract of a letter which has been written by His Excellency's orders to the Commissary General authorizing certain supplies to be provided for the militia of Upper Canada and it will be satisfactory for you to be informed that measures have been adopted for complying with that requisition and there is reas

on to believe that the several articles will be in readiness to be forwarded to you at the period stated, at the opening of navigation in the spring.

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[1] Captain William King of the United States army, taken prisoner at Frenchman's Creek

[2] See Documentary History, 1812, Part II, pp 287-291

[3] Ibid pp 303 308

[4] Robert Dickson the noted trader among the Indians of the Northwest a brother of William Dickson of Niagara and Thomas Dickson of Queenston

"The clothing which has been approved of by His Excellency for the militia of Upper Canada consists of green jackets red cuff and collar and whitelows, blue gunmouth trowsers and felt regulation cap."

(Dominion Archives, C 1220, pp 84-85.)

The resumption of hostilities had demonstrated the imprudence of permitting the departure of enemy aliens who might give useful information and Captain Loring addressed a letter on the subject to Colonel Claus and the other commissioners appointed for their examination.

"Gentlemen

"I am directed by His Honor Major General Sheaffe to communicate to you his wish, for your assembling on some early day for the purpose for which you have been appointed, But as circumstances have so much changed since the date of the Proclamation under which you have been instructed to act, that the public safety may be endangered by granting Passports to the extent which was then contemplated, His Honor desires that you will report for his consideration the cases of all claimants of Passports, and that you will suspend the granting any, until he shall have decided thereon."

When cold weather set in desertion to their homes by the militia on the frontier increased to an alarming extent and active measures were taken to bring them back. Captain Charles Askin addressed the following order to his Lieutenant, Christian McDonnell, who was then apparently on leave at his own home in Haldimand.

"On the receipt of this you will immediately go with Wm Kerr & Alex. Lymburner and with them take every deserter from my company in your neighborhood. David Merritt's pass will be out when you receive this and Minor Chambers's also. You will get them to assist if necessary, if not you must tell them to return immediately. You will inquire if Kerr's family are sick or not. He and Lymburner can bring three or even more prisoners. You will hasten down here for you are wanted very much. I shall expect you on Monday next. You will pass through Canborough on your way to this and assist Mr. Canby in taking and having some deserters now at that place sent down.

"Near Chippawa, Decr 4th, 1812"

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

General Sheaffe described the situation as he appreciated it, in a letter to Sir George Prevost, dated at Fort George on December 9.

"I have to apologise to Your Excellency for the omission of intelligence from Colonel Procter, when I dispatched my letter of the 4th inst.[1] in which it was referred to. I now have the honor of transmitting it. Appearances on the other side agree with the accounts we have lately received. There are few men to be seen. The weather is cold for the season, but as yet there is but little snow.

"The desertion of our Militia has increased since the beginning of this month, but I expect the voluntary return of many. I hope that the rigor of the season and the state of the River will soon permit my authorising at least for a time the absence of a large portion of the Militia. When a bridge of ice shall be formed between us and the enemy, it will require all the force we can muster to afford a chance of maintaining our position, and indeed the whole will probably be inadequate to the task of preventing occasional predatory incursions. Some days ago a twenty four pounder (from Detroit) that had been remounted on one of the Batteries opposite to Black Rock, burst, but fortunately did no other mischief than wounding Capt'n Kerby slightly in the hand. The Gun has been replaced by an 18 pounder. A vessel having the appearance of one of the Enemy's gun boats was seen yesterday morning about 10 or 12 miles to the Eastward, near the American shore. A bitter north west wind was blowing last night and still continues. She has probably run back to Sacket's Harbour.

"The weather has not permitted a communication by water with York since the 21st of November, and it is now deemed prudent to lay up the Prince Regent there. Colonel Vincent has adopted the same opinion respecting the Royal George and Moira at Kingston, that it would be attended with too much hazard to allow them to sail, he therefore proposes laying them up there, in which he does not foresee any disadvantage. There will at least be some inconvenience in their being separated from the naval depot, and they run more risk from the Enemy at Kingston. I shall impress on Colonel Vincent the necessity for taking every precaution for their security."

(Sheaffe's Letter-Book)

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[1] See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, Part II, p. 278.

Charles Askin continued to write to his father at intervals giving him fairly full information of recent events

"Mountain Near Queenston, Dec 11th, 1812

"Dear Father,

"Your affectionate favour of the 28th Ulto came to hand the night before last I am surprised to find by it that very few of the letters I have wrote you since I have been down here have reached you, the one giving an account of the Battle of Queenston went up in the Lady Prevost with some others and some newspapers, and I fancy you must have got them before this John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and newspapers and I fancy you must have got them before this John & William Robertson were both in the Battle and distinguished themselves Will am particularly who behaved as gallantly as any one engaged that day Robt Hamilton & Alexr were in it also but only in the afternoon and Alex could not take an active part in it for he could not ride nor hardly walk on account of boils therefore remained or went with Capt Holcroft who was cannonading the enemy when crossing the River I had been laying confined to my bed three days before the action with boils and so ill with them that part of the time I could not even Sit up in bed to eat my Victuals. I was at George Hamilton's when the attack was made and had to get off as well as I could I remained a short time in Queenston, but finding the enemy were getting the better of us I went away to avoid being taken prisoner an account of the battle is in one of the newspapers I sent you therefore shall defer saying anything more about it at present Soon after an armistice was concluded which did not terminate until the 19th Ult Our Batteries at Fort George the day after its termination opened on Fort Niagara and a cannonade was kept up all day, some houses were burnt on the other side & about as many at Navy Hall we lost two men Capt Fry a half pay Officer and a Soldier of the 49th Regt, and I believe the enemy lost but few Some shots were fired from Queenston over to Lewiston but not returned from that day we were quiet enough except now and then a false alarm, until the 28th Ult when 500 of the Enemy came over from Black Rock and landed near the Ferry below Fort Erie about 1 o Clock in the morning most of them unobserved they fired on our men at the Batteries who had only time to spike the Cannon and make their escape after defending themselves, but resistance was useless against such a force, some of the Regular Artillery were killed and some wounded Mr King was severely wounded and taken prisoner and is since dead, about 40 of the 49th Regt and some Militia attacked the Enemy and drove them once or twice, but at last met with a party from Fort Erie who were coming to our support but not knowing in the dark friends from foes they fired on each other Mr Lamont of the 49th Regt was badly wounded, with three balls, he commanded a small party of his Regt, but the Americans were among them and were supposed to be Indians for they all wore blanket coats and looked so much like them in the day time that I am not surprised our men were deceived by them at night. The light company of the 41st Regt who were stationed on the river below the place of attack met the enemy when marching up to aid the 49th, they did not know they were the Americans until the word of command was given make ready take aim the Officer commanding the 41st then attacked them (they were the advance guard of the Enemy) and he drove them back on their main body The 41st then Retired until day light, for it was impossible to know your friends from your foes At daybreak the Enemy had all retreated and crossed the River, except Capt King Aid de Camp to General Smith, & 35 men who were taken prisoners, a party of Sailors composed part of the force who came over, these Scoundrels set fire to some houses of Mr Douglas's & Mr Hardison's which were burnt to the ground these fellows had to make a precipitate retreat some were killed and others taken prisoners We lost nearly eighty men killed, wounded & those taken prisoners the prisoners have since been exchanged the 49th & the long Point Militia suffered most After day light the Enemy made an attempt with seventeen boats to come over, we had then about eight hundred men ready to receive them and when the boats came within musket shot, we poured such a brisk fire among them that the foremost boats cried out for Quarter, but as it was impossible to stop the Militia from firing on them, they all turned back A three pounder was playing on them all the time and giving them plenty of Grape or Cannister shot What number the Americans lost in this attempt to cross is not known, but the boats were full when they were coming to this side and only five, six or seven were seen to get out of most of them, when they reached the other shore In this and the Affair during the night the Enemy may have lost about two hundred men After their failure a large force was seen to collect and upwards of fifty boats, scows &c were filled with men, horses and artillery all ready to come over, (the enemy it has since been ascertained were then 7000 strong) General Smith then summoned the Garrison at

Fort Erie to surrender, but an answer was sent him to say that we would not think of surrendering the place as we could repel any force he could bring against it and we only had then about fifteen hundred men at the place and hardly a Cannon to fire at them which the Enemy knew, and they had at least 16 field pieces and those very fine ones Immediately after he got the Answer instead of coming over, he disembarked all his troops. Its said that part of his Army were so disgusted with him that they endeavored to kill him and three shots were fired at him, one thing seems certain that he had to fly from his Army, this we have from our prisoners who have returned from there, an inhabitant of the Head of the Lake, who made his escape from that side, from Capt Fitzgerald who was over with a flag of truce and saw two thousand of his Army paraded for him and that hundreds were returning home. All the Militia Volunteers are gone and the Army of the Centre, as General Smith is pleased to call it, was reduced by desertion & death from seven thousand to three thous[an]d I Saw one of this cowardly General's Proclamations lately, he has the impudence to call Upper Canada part of the United States Its a good deal like Hull's but not quite so barbarous. This General Smith was to do so much when he came that he allmost alarmed us, but he proves to be even worse than Hull We have been quite on the alert since the business at Fort Erie and as the desertions and sickness has been very common among the Militia our force is much reduced and the duty has become very hard both on the officers and men who remain We have lost a number of Militia Men by the Pleurisy, they are taken very suddenly and very violently ill and often die in eight or nine days Numbers of women in the Country have died also lately and what is strange you hardly hear of a Regular soldier being sick, but they are used to fatigue and are well clad which is not the case with all the Militia, but clothing is now given to the flank Companies, some articles for nothing & some at a very low rate We have a most Gallant Young Officer here, Col Bishopp who commanded at Fort Erie the day General Smith pretended to come over. He does everything he can to make the Militia comfortable and does not mind a little expense, he has already ingratiated himself in their favor and he is as much liked by them I believe as General Brock was We are in great hopes of soon having a peace, everything seems nearly settled between Sir John B Warren & Mr Monroe I think the Oxen had better be sold to Mr Brush at the price you mention for I should not know what to do with them here

"Please give my love to my Dear Mother my Brothers & Sisters

"I am your dutiful & Affectionate son

Charles Askin

John Askin Esq
near Sandwich

"Please thank Alex for me for the sword he was so kind as to send me I sent up a few things this fall which I hope you will receive by the Lady Prevost

"P S I have been stationed with my Company at & near Chippawa I am now on leave of absence for a few days & am spending them here with John Robertson & to-morrow I must return to my Duty John Robertson desires his best regards to you."

(Burton Historical Library, Askin Papers)

In a letter to Hon Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Chauncey described the success of his efforts in delaying or preventing the transportation of reinforcements and supplies from Kingston to Niagara, which had caused so much privation to the troops defending that frontier

"Sackets Harbor, 9 Dec, 1812

"Confidential

"Sir

"On the 8th inst I sent a flag of truce over to Kingston with Mr Murney, late owner of the sloop Elizabeth My real motive in sending this flag over was to gain information of the strength at that place which consists of about 600 of the 49th regiment and nearly 1000 militia They also can call in 2000 militia in 24 hours notice That part of the Glengary regiment (say about 500) which was at Kingston at the time I made the attack upon the Royal George finding that they could not get up the Lake by water have marched to York by land The Royal George Earl Moira and a schooner all loaded with military stores and clothing for the Army & Indians at Fort George, have made four attempts to escape from Kingston since the 20th of November but upon seeing our blockading squadron have run back They have now relinquished all hope of getting up this winter and have in consequence discharged the stores &c and laid up their vessels I therefore hope to have the pleasure of conducting them into Sackets Harbor before they get another chance to get up the Lake It is also a satisfaction to know that we have prevented the Enemy from sending to Fort George and the posts on that part of the Lake the clothing and arms that his troops may require this winter Mr Vaughan[1] could not learn that the enemy contemplated an attack upon this place this winter, on the contrary they appeared to apprehend one from us

"The information contained in this letter was obtained from an officer on board the Royal George who Mr Vaughan had known for several years and who is friendly disposed towards us, it therefore may be depended upon We shall be prepared here at all events to give them a warm reception if they should make any attempt upon us this winter"

(Captains' Letters, Navy Department MSS, Washington)

The apparent discomfort and discontent of the militia determined General Sheaffe to relieve a considerable portion of them from active duty by relays This was announced in a letter from Lieut Colonel Cecil Bisshopp to Lieut-Colonel Clark

"Fort Erie Decr 13th, 1812

"It is Major General Sheaffe's desire that all the militia be sent home One of the flank companies of the 1st 2d, 3d & 4th Lincoln Regiments be permitted to return home for the space of a fortnight, then to return to relieve the remaining companies of each of those corps

'One of the flank companies of the Norfolk and York Regts will likewise be allowed to go home but as these are at a greater distance from home than the others they will not be expected to return till three weeks have elapsed from the day of the departure of each company from its quarters An alarm post for every company is to be established at a point most convenient to assemble at for returning to their quarters

"A gun is intended to be placed on the hill near the entrance of Lundy's Lane to give the alarm if necessary by three discharges at intervals of five minutes

'Particular care is to be taken of the arms and ammunition which the men are to take with them and be responsible for under the superintendence of their captains who with their subalterns are to inspect them once a week by squads, one for each officer either at the men's houses or assembled at some central convenient spot for the men composing it The barrack or other articles that may have been issued for stationary use to the companies going home are to be delivered in at the nearest post to the proper persons for receiving them whose receipts are to be taken for them in duplicate one of which is to be transmitted to Lt Col Nichol Q M General

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[1] William Vaughan, a local sailing master, see Lossing's Fieldbook of the War of 1812, p 368

"This arrangement is to be carried into effect as quietly as possible to avoid the observation of the enemy

Private instructions to the foregoing effect are to be given to the commanders of corps & companies and means are to be taken for carrying them into effect immediately unless there be any obstacle of sufficient importance to justify their being suspended

"I have the honor to be Sir,
Your ob't serv't
Cecil Bisshopp
Lt Col Inspt Fd Officer

'Lt Col Clark
'Comdg 2nd Lin Militia

"On the other side is the list of the Flank Companies that will go home till the 28th Inst, then to return and relieve the others of their respective Regts

"Likewise the companies of the 2nd York and Norfolk that are to remain till the 4th of Jany

"Capt Nelles's company will march to Ft Erie as well as Capt Applegarth's to-morrow morning

"To go home till 28th inst
"2nd Lin Capt Hamilton
"3d Lin Capt Warren
"4th Lin Capt W Crooks
"5th Lin Capt Hatt
"1st do Capt Js Crooks

To remain till 28th inst
Capt Rowe
Major Warren
Capt Nelles
Capt Durand
Capt McEwen

"Till 4th Jany
'2nd York Capt Chisholm
"1st Norfolk Capt Bostwick
"2nd do Capt White

Till 4th Jany
Capt Applegarth
Capt McCall
Capt Rapalgee

(Dominion Archives, Askin Papers)

Next day Charles Askin wrote another long letter giving further information of recent events

'Dear Father "Near Queenston December 14th, 1812

"Your affectionate favor of the 26th Ulto I had the pleasure of receiving a few days ago and partly answered, but could not go to Niagara therefore missed an opportunity of sending you an answer by the return of the Mail I luckily met with one of Lord Selkirk's men from Baldoon who is kind enough to take charge of this and says he will leave it at Dolson's for you as also of another letter I gave him to-day which I wrote you two days ago in which I have given you an account of an affair which took place on the 28th Ulto at Fort Erie in which we suffered severely but our Enemy much more, and the business terminated much to our honour and in such a manner as to convince the American Nation that Canada is not to be conquered in such an easy manner as they imagined General Smith sent a Summons to the Com'g Officer at Fort Erie on that day to surrender that Garrison and its Dependencies he then had seven thousand men under his Command at Black Rock and Buffaloe and we had but fifteen hundred at Fort Erie to oppose him part of them Indians and part Militia but an answer was sent him by Col Bishopp (a very Gallant Young Officer just from Spain) that he could not think of doing it as he had sufficient force to repel any force he could bring over Gen Smith then had a part of his Army embarked in sixty boats scows, &c ready to come over, and we were ill-prepared to receive him which he knew very well for most of our Cannon had been spiked by a party of his men or our own that morning when the party from the other side came and surprised our men in the Batteries, but Gen Smith had not courage enough notwithstanding all these advantages to attempt to come over and immediately on receiving the Answer to his Summons disembarked his troops Some of his men Yanky-like wanted to know from him what he meant by his Maneuver but he would not condescend to tell them & this gave them Such Offence that three or four shot it's said were fired at him and he made his escape One thing is certain that he is gone but (as great a Coward as I think him) I hardly think he has left his Army in the shameful manner he is said to have done He is one of the most Violent Generals I think that has been opposed to us this War, if poor Hull is hung for Cowardice I think there is not many of their Generals but should share the same fate General Van Ranselaer I think was a good Officer but he was too liberal and too much of a Gentleman to please his Country, he was obliged to give up the Command and General Smith superseded him

"I am sorry to say the Naval Department on Lake Ontario have done nothing to boast of this War and the Americans, unless other Officers & Crews are got for our Vessels will make themselves masters of that Lake next Spring Some Merchant Vessels have been taken in Sight of the Royal George by small armed American Vessels and no exertion made to save them or rescue them A Lieut of the British Navy arrived yesterday at Niagara who I believe will have the Command of One and some others I believe with a Crew from Halifax are coming and four Vessels are ordered to be built two at Kingston and two at York, there is no doubt that the Enemy will try every means in their power to make themselves masters of both Lakes Ontario & Erie

"No troops I believe are yet on their way here though it has been frequently reported there were except twenty of the Royal Artillery and an Officer, who I believe are now on the road between Kingston & this, they are much wanted here for though we have 2 Companies of Militia Artillery on the lines its not enough and men from the 41st & 49th have sometimes to Assist in Manning the Guns Some troops I saw in a Montreal paper to-day are on their march from Halifax to Quebec under the command of Lt Col Hamilton of the 100th Regt what number it is not said

"I saw English papers as late as 25th Augt, there is hardly anything said about the War with the Americans and I only see an account of one Regt going to Halifax I think its the 97th though there are lists of the reinforcements going to Portugal & Spain, the papers nearly filled with accounts of Lord Wellington's great Victories in Spain & Portugal A prayer has been ordered to be used throughout the United Kingdom of Eng[land] & Ireland thanking the Almighty for our Successes in Spain particularly for the Victory over the French at the Battle of Salamanca No more titles can be given Lord Wellington than he allready has for he has Spanish & Portugese ones enough to fill half a sheet of paper nearly I believe they are now at a loss to know what rewards to make him for his splendid achievements

"St. Regis a small Town in Lower Canada which was taken some time ago by the Americans has lately been retaken by us & a company of Americans were lately taken at a place called River Sable by a party of Militia

"General Dearborn, the Commander in Chief of the American Army, its said is going against Montreal with 16 000 men they have not many troops in Lower Canada, yet I fancy General Dearborn will meet with a warm reception if he goes there There are two Regts raised in Lower Canada since the War one called the Voltigeurs & the other Voyageurs there are fine active Canadians in each

"We are flattered notwithstanding the preparations we are making for War with hopes of a speedy and honorable peace Sir John B Warren is said to be at Washington and all differences between the two countries is settled except the Naturalization of British born subjects who come to

America respecting this our Ambassador and Mr Monroe cannot agree

"I am sorry it has not been in my power to pay the Auction Acct but intend to pay it before I get the prize money[1] for I do not know when if ever I get any I am anxious to pay Mr Pattinson[2] the money I borrowed of him last Summer I have been disappointed in getting money here otherwise I would have done it before this I wish Alex. to pay what he owed me to Mr Pattinson & hope he has done it, if not beg that he will now, and send me a receipt of it Mr Brush[3] gave a draft on me favour Doctr Day or Mr Eastman & cannot recollect which for the hundred dollars which he lent Major Chambers This draft he begged me to accept which to oblige him I did at Detroit The draft was lost in the Caledonia or Detroit so Doctr Day and Mr Eastman have both wrote me, and both of them have requested me to pay it but I have never received the money yet from Chambers tho' it has been ready for me a long time, indeed I could have had it any time when I pleased to call for it but seeing no one authorized to receive it I never got it of him The Money I think I will get now & send it to Mr Brush, on his giving me a proper receipt for it mentioning every circumstance respecting the transaction that I may not hereafter be liable to pay the money & have to suffer for wishing to oblige him & his friends that Day I would like to let Mr Brush have his grey mare at the price he sold her to me, for I have more horses than I know what to do with A receipt from Mr Pattinson will be all I want for that amount & I will then send her to him but he must pay the charges of her bringing up if any I could sell her but wish him to have her again as he appeared partial to her

"Elizabeth Meredith's Miniature picture I have got, but do not like to send it now

"Please give my love to my Dear Mother, my Brothers & Sisters

"Your dutiful and Affectionate Son
Charles Askin

"P S I wish it was possible to get the pistol you lent Mr Pattinson

'to John Askin Esq'r
'Care of Matthew Dolson Esq'r
"River Thames—Sandwich."

(Burton Historical Library, Askin Papers)

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[1] Awarded for the capture of Detroit

[2] Richard Pattinson, a merchant at Sandwich and a member of the Legislative Assembly for Essex 1812-1816

[3] Elijah Brush of Detroit, husband of his sister Adelaide

An official return has been preserved of the casualties of the Second Lincoln, of which the flank companies and a considerable portion of the rest of the regiment had been on service since the declaration of war had been announced.

"List of men belonging to the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia who have been wounded or have died since the 26th of June last

Stephen Peer	Wounded at Queenston, Oct 13th, since recovered.
Morris Derrick (or Detrick)	
Charles Cook	Shot through the thigh at Fort Erie, 28th Novr., recovering slowly.
Gershom Conger	Died since 28th Novr
John Clark	
*David Tallan	
*Gabriel Smith	
John Gallipo	
David Bouck	
Daniel Millard	
*Hyre Waters	
*Daniel Hickson	
Benjamin Skinner	
Orman Ensign	
William Brooks	
Colin McCallum	
John Hodgkins	
James Stevenson	
Peter Wright	
*Lewis David	
George Couck	

"Note—The names marked with a (*) were single men, the others were men with families

"Chippawa, Jany 1st, 1813

"Thomas Clark, Lt Col 2nd Lincoln Militia."

NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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RECORDS OF NIAGARA

A Collection of Contemporary Letters and Documents

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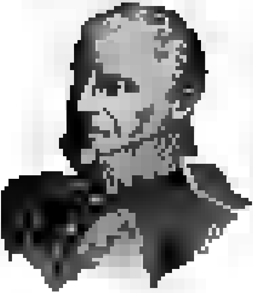

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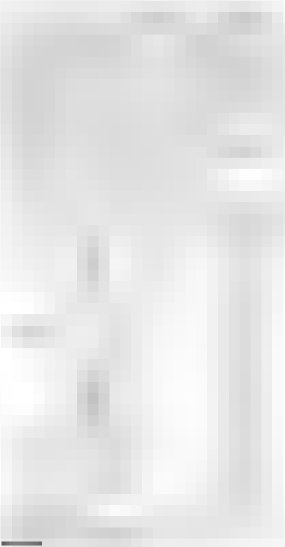

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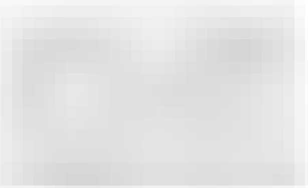

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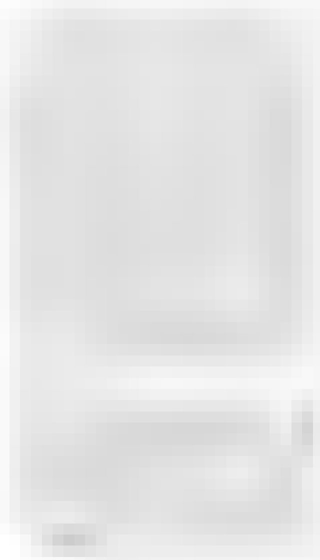

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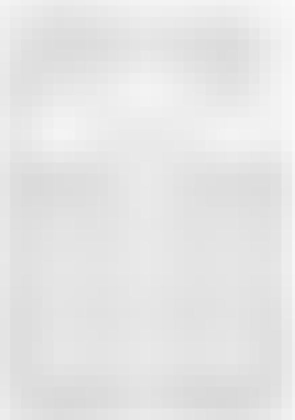

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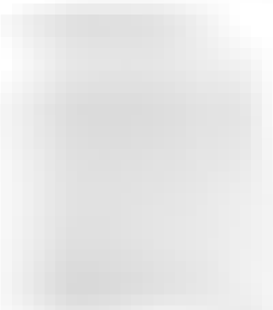

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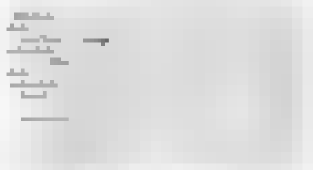

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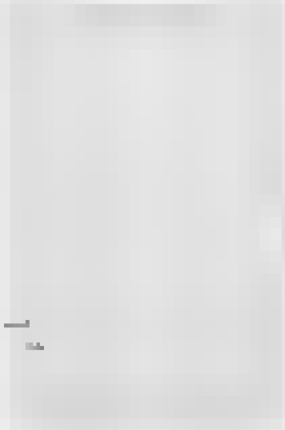

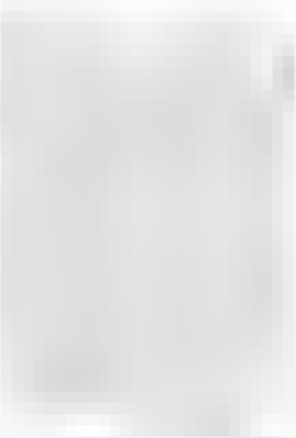[illegible]